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January
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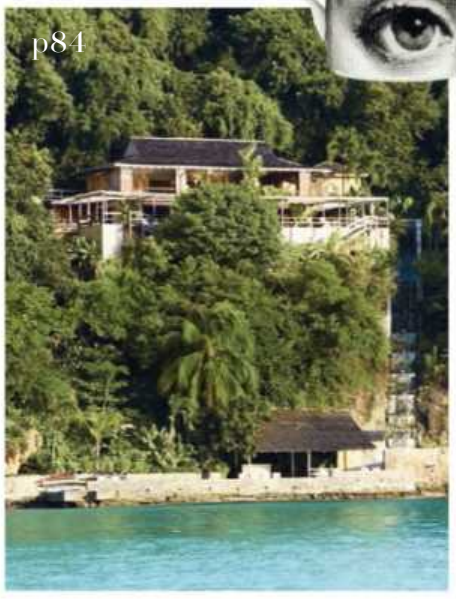


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On the cover: The sitting room of designer Ben Pentreath's Bloomsbury flat (pages 78–83), photographed by Jake Curtis. **Cover stories are highlighted in colour**

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DAVID OLIVER
Photographer

David Oliver has tried his hand at several creative careers. He was a photographer's assistant at the age of 19 in New York, then flew across the world to study sculpture, printmaking and drawing in Sydney, before settling in London and founding the Paper & Paint Library in 1996. He has been its creative director ever since. Now also working as a photographer, he was assigned the task of capturing an open-sided, bamboo-clad house in Mustique. Designed by Veere Grenney and his team, the house is decorated in 50 shades of beige, with bamboo bones that don't distract from the turquoise waters and emerald landscape outside. See the results from page 84.

What is a favourite hobby of yours? 'I'm never happier than when travelling to a new destination. Nomadic by nature, I adore getting lost and then found. My current addiction is treasure hunting in the lesser-known North African medinas.'



BRIDGET SARGESON
Food stylist

It seems inevitable that Bridget Sargeson's name would appear one day in our Wine & Food section. 'My mother and I often used to drool over the sumptuous interiors in *House & Garden*,' she remembers. Her mother was also a terrific cook and she ingrained in her an appreciation for simple food that 'retained its natural attributes'. In charge of the food preparation and styling for 'Modern morsels' (from page 122), Bridget has brought to life the vibrant and varied canapé recipes with 'not a whiff of pastry'.

How did you start as a stylist? 'I was flat-sharing with a home economist and was intrigued by all her stories of working in photographic studios. We both loved cooking and the arts, and I wondered if I could make a career of the two. She took me on a few jobs and I haven't looked back since.'



RABIH HAGE
Interior designer and architect

An architect and 'accidental interior designer', Rabih Hage needs little introduction to *House & Garden* readers. Many of his projects have been featured in the magazine and he has earned a place in our directory of 100 Leading Interior Designers. 'Since my early work in France, I have thought that it's as rewarding to work on buildings from the inside out as building anew,' he says. This month, we step inside the London house he has reconfigured for a family, creating grandly proportioned spaces for both entertaining and relaxing (from page 70).

Any stories from your time working on this London house? 'During one of my final visits, I was chased around the house by a Great Dane – a recent acquisition of the family. Luckily, the marble floor in the entrance hall was so well polished that I made it to the cloakroom unharmed and locked myself in ☐

WORDS: ARITA GHANBARI



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Split Bright by Paul Smith

FROM THE EDITOR



We can deliberate over choosing fabrics for days, weeks, even months, but when it comes to curtains and blinds, the details of how they are made up can easily be overlooked. I have to admit that my knowledge of curtain terminology is scant, but I do know that even if you opt for simple-seeming curtains hanging on a pole or track, it is worth giving proper thought to the headings and fixtures, as they dictate the finished effect far more than you might think. In response to my decorating inadequacies, between pages 49 and 55, Gabby Deeming has collated a host of good advice and examples of curtains – from the pretty softness of antique linen with an unusual shirred pencil-pleat heading to the slickness of those hung on a recessed ceiling track.

In fact, this issue is packed full of practical decorating ideas, including Rita Konig's thoughts on bed linen (page 56) and an in-depth look at bespoke lampshade makers, Copper & Silk (page 58). It seems no interior is complete without pretty pleated lampshades right now – for evidence, look no further than Ben Pentreath's Bloomsbury flat from page 78. There are several companies offering ready-made ones, but if you want them in a fabric of your choice, Copper & Silk are good people to call.

Come February, gleaning such decorating know-how will be made even easier by the launch of The List, *House & Garden*'s new online directory that will be bulging with interior designers, architects, landscape and garden designers, and companies providing design-related services – all searchable by specialism and area. *House & Garden*'s 100 Leading Interior Designers are all included and so are many more, as well as curtain makers, upholsterers and even joiners. If you are a designer or somebody providing a specialist service who hasn't yet signed up, please do – we're hugely excited about it.

On another note, David Nicholls gives us a glimpse into two very different worlds this month. The first is the glamorous Florida lifestyle of Rodman Primack, director of Design Miami, the cutting-edge design fair that takes place this month, from page 61. Then between pages 96 and 101, he takes us to Stoke-on-Trent's struggling but hopeful pottery industry. Here at *House & Garden* we are acutely aware of the difficulties associated with manufacturing in Britain, whether it be finding a mill that will produce the base cloth needed for a printed fabric or a metal worker who can cast and finish a lantern with the skill required. There are some worrying tales and some heartening ones, too – see 'Art scene', page 39, for an interview with Mark Cropper of the thriving paper manufacturer James Cropper. We are keen to champion those who are determined to continue producing their work in this country and to keep their skills and industries alive □

Hatta Byng

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Fabric background: Romilly (marine red), by Virginia White Collection, linen, from Redloh House Fabrics

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PHOTOGRAPHS
BILL BATTEN

On reflection

VIOLA LANARI looks into wall mirrors, from decorative styles to the sleek and streamlined

Clockwise from top left: Painted wood **'Bucranium'**, 106 x 55cm, £2,280, from Jamb. Coconut shell **'Coco'** (white), 75cm diameter, £1,225.20, from Ochre. Painted **'Rope'**, 44cm diameter, £120, from Plümo. Metal and wood **'Cello Oak Leaf'**, 137 x 100cm, £7,200, from Cox London. Metal **'Empire'** (florentine gold), 90 x 54cm, £1,375, from Tom Faulkner. **Background fabric** (reverse shown), 'Urbino' (azzurro/antique white); fabric patches, from left: 'Melila' (azzurro), and 'Shelburn Damask' (sea green); all by Marialida, cotton, £294 a metre, from Tissus d'Hélène ▷



Clockwise from top left: Aluminium and steel **'Ivy Shadow'** (forest rust), by Tord Boontje, 100cm diameter, £3,318, from Porta Romana. Brass **'Large Melo'**, 40 x 28cm, £24.95, from Rockett St George. Anodised aluminium **'Treasure Collection'** (bronze and soft gold), by Amy Cushing, 85 x 86cm, £7,500, from Vessel Gallery. Antique brass **'Vintage I'**, 90 x 68cm, £1,506, from Richard Taylor Designs. Hand-carved sheesham **'Menagerie'**, 84 x 65cm, £368, from Anthropologie. Brass **'Randaccio'**, by Giò Ponti, 60cm diameter, £619, from Gubi. **Background** (reverse shown), 'Tamas' (tan/plum/silvery gold), by Marialida, cotton twill, £294 a metre, from Tissus d'Hélène



Clockwise from top left: Hand-beaded metal and wire '**Madam**', 100 x 80cm, £850, from Justin Van Breda. Cast resin '**Faux Bois**' (white), by Oly Studio, 137 x 79cm, £2,600, from Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam. Painted wood and silver-leaf *verre églomisé* '**Framed Convex**', 71.4cm square, £795, from Dominic Schuster. Lacquered resin '**Thalassa**', by Oriel Harwood, 50 x 55cm, £1,250, from Virginia White Collection. Wooden '**Sorrel**', 120 x 90cm, £490, from Oka. **Background** (reverse shown, with front shown in fabric patch), 'Shelburn Damask' (sea green/antique white), by Marialida, cotton, £294 a metre, from Tissus d'Hélène. **Murals** (in mirrors throughout), from Surface View*. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □

*MURALS, FROM FIRST PAGE: *THOMAS HOPE* BY SIR WILLIAM BEECHEY; *GEORGE GORDON BYRON, 6TH BARON BYRON* BY THOMAS PHILLIPS; *EMMA, LADY HAMILTON*, BY GEORGE ROMNEY; ALL FROM £610 FOR A 200 X 300CM UNSTRETCHED CANVAS, FROM SURFACE VIEW







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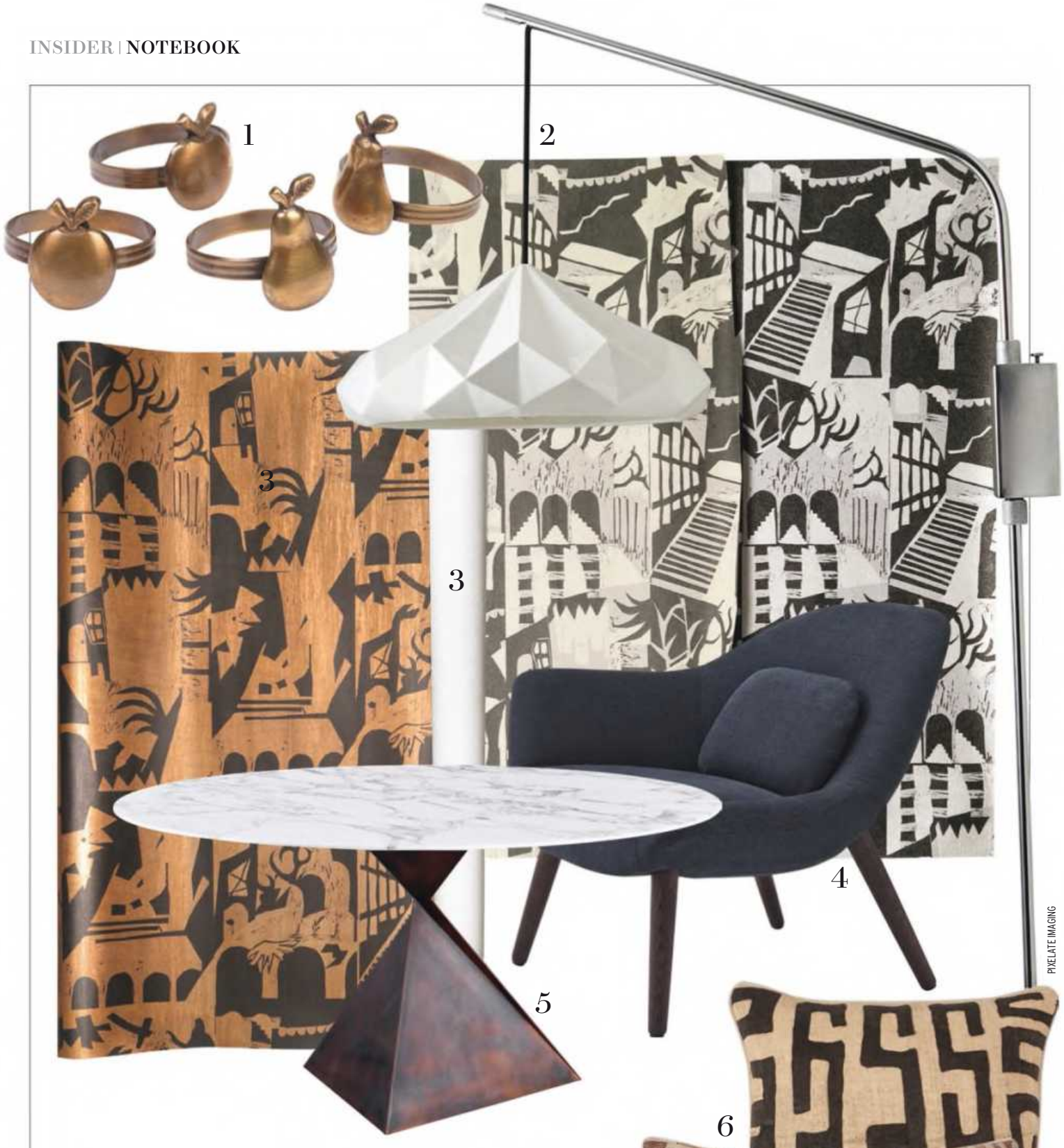
Notebook

GABBY DEEMING shows us what's caught her eye this month



1 Hand-printed **wallpaper**, 'Cloud Garden' (indigo), 52cm wide, £22 a metre, from Rapture & Wright. **2** Porcelain **plate**, 'Ottoman', by Idarica Gazzoni, 20cm, €440 for a set of 4, from Arjumand's World. **3** Hand-antiqued **mirror panel**, 'Cloud Garden' (pale grey), from £550 a square metre, from Rapture & Wright. **4** Straw-marquetry and blackened-steel **bedside table**, 'Cellini' (blue), 65 x 55 x 45cm, £3,420, from Simon Orrell. **5** Painted beech **armchair**, 'Spoonbill', 89 x 68 x 74cm, upholstered in 'Old Flax' (watermelon), cotton/flax, £7,690, from Soane ▷

PIXELATE IMAGING



PIXELATE IMAGING

1 Brass **napkin rings**, 'Amara', £28 for a set of 4 apples or 4 pears, from Rowen & Wren. **2** Metal and bone china **wall light**, 'Hatton 4', 106 x 76 x 41.5cm shade diameter, £599, from Original BTC. **3 Wallpaper**, 'Dr Caligari', by Helen Strevens, printed onto, from left: 'Breezin' (BRE7826), 'Infinity' (INF34252) and 'Radiator' (RAD1249), from £45 a metre, from Tektura Wallcoverings. **4** Spessart oak **armchair**, 'Mad', by Marcel Wanders, 69 x 74 x 70cm, upholstered in 'Derby' (navy), viscose mix, £1,522, from Poliform. **5** Bronze and marble **dining table**, 'Ava', 76 x 150cm diameter, £15,000, from Tom Faulkner. **6** Hand-woven raffia Kuba cloth **cushions**, from top: 'Fafa', 50cm square, £55; and 'Chane', 60 x 80cm, £75; both from Lalibella ▷


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1 Hand-screen-printed cotton **quilt**, 'Rockpool' (blue/grey), 254cm square, £187, from Safomasi. **2** Beech **wardrobe**, by Workstead, 182.5 x 101.6 x 50.8cm, £8,700, from Another Country. **3** Walnut, steel, leather and wool **sofa**, 'Grid', 86 x 187 x 72cm, €2,950, from Petite Friture. **4** Pewterised glass **lamp base**, 48 x 35cm diameter, £488; hand-painted **shade**, 'White Etched Squares', 46cm diameter, £399; both from TMO Lighting. **5 Fabric**, from left: 'Genua' (fire/lake/stone), 'Plain' (gentian, lake green and fire), and 'Milan' (fire/seagreen/black), wool, from £160 a metre, from Gisbert Rentmeister. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □



PIXELATE IMAGING



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HUGO BURNAND

Melissa Wyndham

March 18, 1949 to September 17, 2015

Just before the start of the London Design Festival in September, sad news arrived that the interior designer Melissa Wyndham had died at the age of 66. The talented designer had decorating in her blood: her great aunt was Nancy Lancaster and her sister Jane Churchill. Melissa's major projects included Petworth House in Sussex, the Pugin interior of Lismore Castle in Ireland and Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire, and she's also designed fabrics, rugs and furniture. As former *House & Garden* editor Susan Crewe, who had known Melissa since they were both in their teens, recalls, 'She had a marvellous and original sense of colour, and her clients loved her because she was a wonderful combination of being professional and enormously good fun.' Melissa was first diagnosed with breast cancer nearly 20 years ago. 'But she was unfailingly upbeat,' says Susan. 'She never, never complained and always went into the office. She simply didn't let it impede her progress.' *House & Garden* pays tribute to the designer with a look back at some of her beautiful projects at houseandgarden.co.uk/melissawyndham. **David Nicholls**



PATTERN PLAY

'Even when I was younger, I was influenced by the Constructivists – artists like Malevich and Delaunay,' says the rug designer Christine Van Der Hurd. And so, a couple of years ago, she felt the same fizz of excitement at the opening of a show by Venezuelan artist Cipriano Martínez at London's Maddox Arts gallery. 'I loved what he did, his geometry and his discipline in his painting,' she recalls. 'I could picture them working well as silk dhurries.' She invited him to be the first artist to collaborate with her. The result is a set of nine limited-edition silk rugs, four of which are shown above. The ordered geometry that typifies Christine's rugs and textiles has been replaced by Cipriano's more chaotic patterns: swirls of red, purple and blue triangles that morph into one another, creating a head-shaking optical illusion. Just three of each design will be produced, with prices starting at £4,000; available through Maddox Arts until December 19. maddoxarts.com **Arta Ghanbari** ▷



Good bones

A new name on the exceptional roster at gallery-shop Willer is Caste, by US designer Ty Best. Particularly strong are the lithe, sculptural creations in brass, bronze and wood. These include the 'Wishbone Table', shown above in oak with a cast-bronze base and also available with a wenge or walnut top. From £4,295; willer.co.uk. **DN**





Blast from the past

The latest company to have a good rummage through its archive to find designs to put back in production is the English furniture maker Parker & Farr. Having recently rediscovered a 1975 brochure filled with designs by David Hicks (pictured top) for the maker, it has chosen three sofas to reintroduce to its collection. The 'Benson' (pictured above) hasn't been produced since 1978, but it still expresses Hicks' signature groovy joie de vivre. The sofa is shown here in a punchy tomato-red fabric by G P & J Baker, one of many coverings available; it costs £4,068 as seen. *parkerandfarr.com* **DN**



Name to know

PATRICIA URQUIOLA

The twenty-first century has seen the Milan-based Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola develop into one of the giants of the contemporary furniture-design industry. After a few years working for the Italian minimalist Piero Lissoni, she set up on her own in 2001 and has built up a staggering portfolio: furniture for B&B Italia and Moroso, rugs for Gan, accessories for Kartell, marble work for Budri, bathware for Agape, and much more. A unifying characteristic of her diverse work is what has been described as a feminine sensibility – not to be confused with clichéd girliness. Natural materials and craft processes are abundant, comfort and practicality considered – in her words, 'tools for living'. Patricia's most recent project is a kitchen (her first) for the Italian company Boffi, which presents a modern slant on an earthy, eclectic aesthetic. At the London launch, she said it was time for 'a different kind of kitchen' to the streamlined, strictly functional spaces we are accustomed to. The modular 'Salinas' design (above) uses smooth and textured components such as wood, zinc, copper, glass and ceramic, which can be combined to create individual designs. Prices start at £36,000. *boffi.com* | *patriciaurquiola.com* **DN**



LUXURY LEATHER

Known for her embroidered fabrics, Victoria Bain has joined forces with Whistler Leather to produce a range of embellished leathers, which can be used for upholstery, wall panels and cushions. The stools pictured above in, from left, the 'Alex' and 'Claydon' patterns, cost £2,050 each. The range comes in a wide selection of colours, including the imaginatively named Verbier Rich Promise (left) and Bilbao Terracotta (right) seen here. The leathers are embroidered in Nottingham and take six weeks to make. A custom-embroidered hide costs from £250 a square foot. *whistlerleather.com*
Elizabeth Metcalfe



MAGICAL WINTRY TOUR

Once again, Kew Gardens (above) has created an enchanting after-dark experience for the Christmas season. Armed with roasted chestnuts and mulled wine, visitors are invited to wander along a glittering, illuminated one-mile trail. During the day, there will be Christmas-decoration and card-making workshops, and there are rumours of an appearance by Father Christmas. Christmas at Kew runs until January 2. *kew.org/christmas* **DN** ▷

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FIRST PERSON

Founded by HELEN CORMACK in 2006, Tissus d'Hélène at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour is a mecca for interior designers, boasting a range of fabrics and wallpapers from all over the globe

My mother read *House & Garden* and, trawling through her old issues, I stumbled across Mary Fox Linton's house. Although it was not to my taste, because I'm not a modernist in any shape or form, it made such an impression on me. Seeing her design and reading the interview persuaded me to move into interior decoration in 1984.

It was a chance meeting with Nina Campbell that led to the inception of Tissus d'Hélène. She had two fabulous fabric houses – Quidrille and Galbraith & Paul – which she was no longer able to represent and asked if I was interested in taking them on. I had to pinch myself I was so pleased.

The first year, my turnover was absolutely tiny and I wondered if more people were going to walk through the door. Bit by bit they did and here I am nine years later.

I represent 52 companies in total, including wallpapers, fabrics and carpets. It's so interesting how they all work together. There's the potential for endless combinations.

I was raised on colour and pattern – my mother's clothes were made from Liberty prints and I wore Fair Isle sweaters and kilts. My grandmother had Fifties' Swedish furniture covered in bright wools – she mixed everything with style.

If something is handprinted, it's not perfect and it can't be perfect. Every single version will always be different and that's what makes it appealing. It's an important lesson for my clients to learn.

I launched my own collection, Fleurons d'Hélène, three years ago, with floral and geometric cotton prints in variegated colours, followed by chintzes, all edited from my private compilation of old European documents dating from the mid-eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century. My latest additions are handsome stripes, chenilles and *striés*.

My idea is to build a collection that reflects my eclectic taste and love of pattern – paisleys, ikats, and old English and French prints – as well as textured plains. I would also love to do a wallpaper collection. Developing all this has been the most incredible learning curve and is taking me on a wonderful journey of textile history and an understanding of printing and weaving.
421 Design Centre East, Chelsea Harbour, SW10; tissusdhelene.co.uk
Emily Tobin





Out of Africa

South African craft takes centre stage in Curate, Justin Van Breda's new accessories collection. The interior designer has worked with 11 artists from his home country to produce a magnificent 25-piece collection, including, from the top, an oxidised bronze vessel by Otto du Piessis (£380); 'Singing Tulip' vase by Samantha Morgan (£1,950); hand-painted plate by Michael Chandler (£650); and 'Charcoal Pot 1' by Chuma Maweni (£550). j-v-b.com **EM** □





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Just in time

ROSE DAHLSEN scours the internet for Christmas essentials that can be delivered to your door at the last minute

This year, forget the frenetic whizz around the shops to buy those all-important final decorations and presents – you can do it all with the click of a button instead. **Wrapping paper**, 'Brussels Sprout', £9.95 for 5 sheets, order by December 21, from Nancy & Betty Studio (nancyandbetty.com). Hand-painted ceramic **baubles**, by Molly Hatch and Starla Halfmann, £12 each, order by December 21, from Anthropologie (anthropologie.com). **Stockings**, from left: Paisley, £26, order by December 19, from Toast (toa.st). Red Liberty print, £39.95; and Christmas tree, £19.95; order both by December 22, from Liberty (liberty.co.uk). Pompoms, £20, from Habitat, order by December 21, from Habitat (habitat.co.uk). **Crackers**, 'Stag and Mistletoe', £55 for a box of 6, with a hand-printed handkerchief in each, order by December 20, from Thornback & Peel (thornbackandpeel.co.uk).

FOUR FINISHING TOUCHES

FLOWERS

White narcissus flowers make quick and pretty table decorations. Scented Narcissi sells a bunch of 50 fragrant stems for £22, order by December 21. *scentednarcissi.co.uk*



PUDDING

Melrose and Morgan creates handmade plum puddings, which contain stout, brandy, prunes and mixed peel; £16.95 for a 900g pudding, order by December 18. *melroseandmorgan.com*



WREATH

Helen Green Design has teamed up with John Carter Flowers to create this wreath of copper beech, laurustinus and snow berries; £175, order by December 14. *johncarterflowers.com*



SCENT

With frankincense, pine and gingerbread, Roja Parfums' 'Essence of Christmas' candle would also make a handy emergency present; £75, order by December 21. *rojaparfums.com*





IN THE DETAILS
Embroidered linen napkin with bunny motif, by Coral & Tusk, £19.95, order by December 22, from Liberty. *liberty.co.uk*

THREE OF THE BEST NAPKINS



CHRISTMAS ANGLES
Geometric-design paper napkins, £3.50 for 20, order by December 18, from Talking Tables. *talkingtables.co.uk*



TREE'S COMPANY
Screen-printed linen/cotton napkins, €21 for 2, order by December 14, from Fine Little Day. *finelittleday.com* □

PIXELATE IMAGING; GAP PHOTOS/VISIONS



SPECTACLED BEAR. *Tremarctos ornatus*. FACING EXTINCTION.

The extinction of Ecuador's rarest species is just too much to bear.

In a remote and unique habitat, engulfed in a near permanent blanket of fog, rare and magical mammals like the spectacled bear and the mountain tapir make their homes. Flourishing alongside them are forests of micro orchids, some of the world's tiniest plant species, which can only survive in the conditions particular to these locations.

Defending these extraordinary forests, and the plants and animals that rely on them, is a shared vision for international charity World Land Trust and its Ecuadorian partner, the charity Fundación EcoMinga. Since 2007 the two organisations have been working together to buy parcels of land, bit by bit, acre by acre, to create nature reserves to secure the future of known species and those yet to be discovered.

Recent reports show that a cluster of properties in the Andean cloud forest have come on to the market which is exciting news. The properties are close to existing reserves and a priority for protection, but time is short: World Land Trust urgently needs £500,000 to save these areas and the species they shelter.

Donations will make a real difference to the world's remaining cloud forests, preserving them as a permanent safe habitat for all the species – great and small – that depend on them for survival. The future of these fragile ecosystems is in our hands, and we can act together to save them today.

For more information please call 01986 874422 or visit *www.worldlandtrust.org*, for instant donations please text LAND12 to 70070 to donate up to £10.

"The money that is given to the World Land Trust, in my estimation, has more effect on the wild world than almost anything I can think of."
— *Sir David Attenborough*, Patron, World Land Trust

WORLD LAND TRUST

Outside Interests

CLARE FOSTER finds fresh gardening inspiration

WHAT'S IN STORE?

Designed to withstand all weathers, the 'Aldsworth Outdoor Storage Box' from **Garden Trading** would also work well in a garden shed. Measuring 64 x 104 x 60cm, it is made from spruce and zinc with a slanted lid to allow rain to run off; this large size is £195 plus p&p. *gardentrading.co.uk*

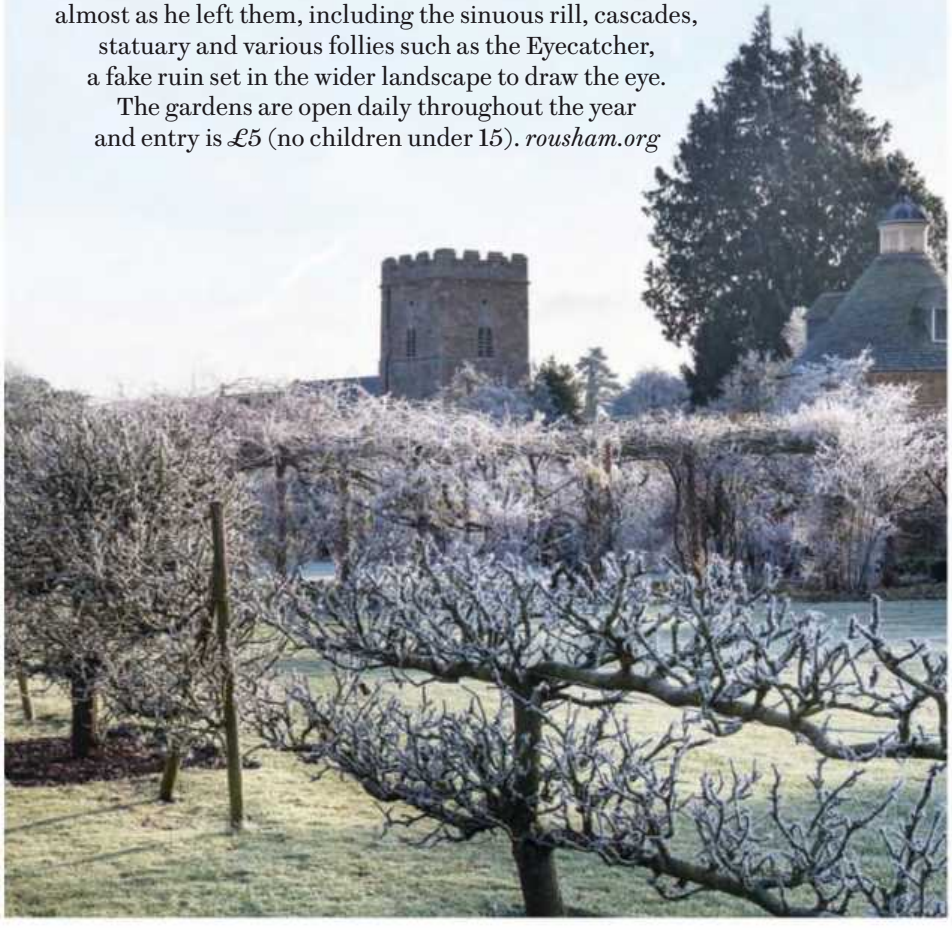


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WINTER INSPIRATION

Rousham Gardens in Oxfordshire are a joy in midwinter, with all the structural elements laid bare. Designed by William Kent in the eighteenth century, the gardens are almost as he left them, including the sinuous rill, cascades, statuary and various follies such as the Eyecatcher, a fake ruin set in the wider landscape to draw the eye. The gardens are open daily throughout the year and entry is £5 (no children under 15). *rousham.org*



FEAST FOR THE EYES

If you are heading to **Kew Royal Botanic Gardens** for its Christmas activities (see 'News and views'), be sure to visit the *Nature's Bounty* exhibition in the Shirley Sherwood Gallery. It showcases paintings of fruit, vegetables and edible plants, including *Beetroot*, pictured right, by Susannah Blaxill. *Until January 31; admission is included with entry to the gardens, £16.50* ▷



© RBG KEW; ANDREW LAWSON

PLANTING IDEAS: WINTER SEEDHEADS

The prairie garden at Cambo Gardens in Scotland (see 'Snow white splendour' in this issue) proves that seed heads can be beautiful. The muted colours and architectural outlines of perennials and grasses create a scene far more dynamic than chopped-back stems and bare earth, as well as providing a source of food and shelter for birds and small animals. If you choose your plants carefully, the more robust specimens will last right through until March, to be cut down only when the first green shoots are coming through. For maximum visual interest, choose plants with varying shapes and structures, from button-like cones and umbels to spires and spikes.

TOP FIVE PLANTS FOR SEED HEADS

Phlomis russeliana is the absolute best seed head for robustness and longevity. Its chocolate-brown seed capsules are held in whorls up the stem, providing the perfect playground for flocks of goldfinches and other small birds, which feast on the seeds. Phlomis thrives in dry, poor soils, and can spread quickly, so keep it in check by lifting and dividing every few years.

Ornamental grasses, such as *Miscanthus sinensis*, are strong and long-lasting, their fluffy blond seed heads creating a golden backdrop for other plantings. I grew 'Malepartus' in my previous garden; it is a striking plant with purplish plumes that will silver beautifully as they age.

Coneflowers such as *Echinacea purpurea* or *E. pallida* flower late in the season, leaving distinctive buttony cones as they die back. They are classic American prairie plants that look good planted in ribbons and drifts. Rudbeckias such as *R. laciniata* or *R. fulgida* var. *deamii* 'Goldsturm' can be put in the same camp, with similar dark-brown cones on willowy stems.

Veronicastrum virginicum's candelabra-like spires provide upright accents in the garden and last well into winter, turning rich shades of brown as they fade. The flowers of the cultivar 'Fascination' have a tendency to thicken out, providing a different, more robust profile than the delicate 'Lavendelturm'. Both work well in winter.

The spiky forms of eryngiums are also very worthy candidates for a winter garden. *Eryngium giganteum* fades to a golden hue, lit up by a low winter sun, while smaller forms such as *E. amethystinum* are sparkling jewels when outlined in frost.

FURTHER READING: *Seedheads in the Garden* by Noel Kingsbury (Timber Press)*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The classic American prairie plant *Echinacea purpurea*. Ornamental grass *Miscanthus sinensis*. *Eryngium giganteum*. *Phlomis russeliana* seed capsules. *Veronicastrum virginicum*

*AVAILABLE AT AMAZON.CO.UK FOR £20. PHOTOGRAPHS: GAP PHOTOS; MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES

The Capability Brown Festival 2016 launches this month to mark the three-hundredth anniversary of Brown's birth (see 'Planned perfection' later in this issue for more about the anniversary). The festival brings together garden openings and events at sites round the country. Details and an interactive map of the Brown sites can be found at capabilitybrown.org.



STARTER KITS

If you have no spare time to browse the seed catalogues, these new seed collections from **Johnsons** are all you need to get going in the garden. Packed in reusable tins, the Award Winning Vegetable Collection includes all the basic vegetables, from leeks to carrots, while the Perfect for Pollinators Collection includes bright zinnias, Californian poppies and nigella; £14.99 each. *johnsons-seeds.com*





THESE TEXTURED 'SKIN POT' VASES, BY ITALIAN COMPANY MYYOUR, ARE MADE FROM MOULDED PLASTIC AND COME IN A RANGE OF 15 COLOURS, FOR INDOOR OR OUTDOOR USE. THE POTS ARE AVAILABLE IN SMALL (60CM HIGH, £220 PLUS P&P) AND LARGE (120CM HIGH, £340 PLUS P&P). *OUTDOOR CHIC.CO.UK* □

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OUT AND ABOUT

Latest launches... chic showrooms... hot buys... CAROLE ANNETT takes note



POINTED PATTERNS

Flicking through *Vogue*, I noticed that zigzag patterns were all over the catwalks for autumn/winter. Echo the theme with, from left, Dedar's **'Tangram'** (001), silk, £164 a metre, and **'On The Edge'** (002), cotton/linen, £130 a metre. *020-7351 9939; dedar.com*

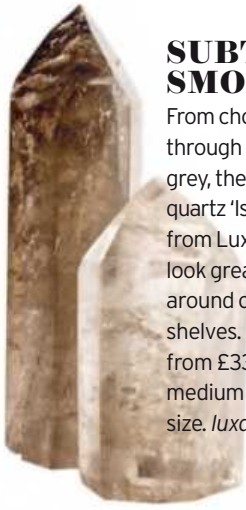




Perfect for fireside reading, the '**Dublin**' chair by the Sofa & Chair Company measures 71 x 75cm square, and costs £1,892 as seen, covered in 'Avorez Mirage' (0790) velvet. *020-8752 8935; thesofaandchair.co.uk*



SOANE'S NEW **ROPE DESIGN**, CREATED FROM TWISTED BRASS FLUTING, FEATURES ON THIS 'ARGO' WALL LIGHT. THE BASE IS 12.5CM TALL AND IT COSTS £1,100 EXCLUDING THE SHADE. *020-7730 6400; SOANE.COM*



SUBTLY SMOKY

From chocolate through to minky grey, these smoky quartz 'Isko' **obelisks** from Luxdeco will look great dotted around on open shelves. They cost from £330 for the medium 17cm-tall size. *luxdeco.com*

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOSHUA MONAGHAN; FEDERICO MARIN. CAROLE IS WEARING A COAT, SHOES AND BAG FROM CAROLINA HERRERA



EARNING STRIPES

Roger Oates has a new service that allows customers to create **striped floor runners** in bespoke colourways. The team will create a digital version, which is then woven onto a 35cm square sample before finally being made into a full runner. *020-7351 2288; rogeroates.com*



OPENING DRAWERS

This oak, iron and copper 'Yoroi' **sideboard**, by Alessandro Masturzo for De Castelli, can also double as a drinks cabinet. It measures 90 x 208 x 46cm and costs £10,190, from Staffan Tollgard. *020-7952 6070; tollgard.co.uk* ▷

NEWS IN BRIEF Drummonds has launched a bathroom design service, making its space-planning expertise available to all customers, free of charge, through its website and at its Notting Hill showroom. drummonds-uk.com

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Samuel & Sons' showroom at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour has row upon row of trimmings, braids and fringing. Pictured are some of its **trims** in stock, from top: 'Diamond Constellation' (smoked trout), 'Rhodes Epinglé Velvet' (teal), 'China Cloud Embroidered' (rubans red), and 'Rhodes Epinglé Velvet' (cabernet); from £78 a metre. *020-7351 5153; samuelandsons.co.uk*



ITALIAN INSPIRATION

Christopher Guy Harrison, founder of the eponymous furniture company, has named this side table **'Giacometti'**, because its long, slender legs reminded him of the Italian artist and sculptor's work. It has a hand-wrought brass base and solid mahogany top, measures 65 x 60cm square, and costs £4,147. *020-3397 2410; christopherguy.com*

***NEWS IN BRIEF** The Monogrammed Linen Shop is now owned by Yves Delorme. I think its personalised bathrobes for little ones are lovely presents. They are available at the shop on Walton Street, SW3 and the Yves Delorme concession at Harrods; from £45 for a one-year size. uk.yvesdelorme.com | harrods.com*

WINNERS' CIRCLE



Our congratulations go to Cia Attling (centre left) and Marie Wallenberg-Olson of Vandra Rugs for winning the ***House & Garden*** **Decorex Award** for most stylish product at Decorex. They are seen here with editor Hatta Byng (left) and decoration director Gabby Deeming (right). 'We are extremely pleased, happy and proud for Vandra Rugs to win this award. We love our product – handwoven rugs in natural materials, based on rag rug techniques – and the endless variations one can make of it,' says Cia. The rug in the background is 'Loro', a new design by architect and designer Ami Katz. Vandra Rugs is based in Stockholm and available in the UK from Sinclair Till. *vandra-rugs.com | sinclairtill.co.uk*

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NICHOLAS SUNDERLAND
nsinteriors.com



MARIAN BOSWALL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
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PHOTOGRAPHS: JOSHUA MONAGHAN



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art scene

Edited by EMILY TOBIN



CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PICTURE *Three Annuals*, 2013. *Aubergine*, 2014. *Phacelia campanularia*, 2013. *Four Funghi*, 2014. *Lapageria rosea II (red form)*, 2014. *Lapageria rosea I (pink form)*, 2014

PICK OF THE CROP

RITA KONIG profiles the artist Emma Tennant, who employs her skills as a gardener to provide subjects for her botanical works

Emma Tennant, whose delicate and charming botanical watercolours are full of character, is currently showing her work in a selling exhibition at The Fine Art Society in London. In the two years since her last exhibition at Chatsworth – which was hosted by her brother, the Duke of Devonshire – she has been travelling and painting watercolours of flowers, fruits and vegetables. These are exhibited alongside a collection of gilded panels created in conjunction with her daughter Isabel.

Emma was first encouraged to garden at the age of six by her parents' gardener Mr Chester – 'an old-school, very skilled, dear fellow'. Since those early years 'hanging around the potting shed', Emma has become a devoted gardener, plantswoman and botanical painter. 'I cannot remember a time when I was not interested in both gardening and painting,' she says. 'I must have been born with a trowel in one hand and a paintbrush in the other.' Her own garden in the Scottish Borders bursts with colour and life. 'Where other people grow vegetables to eat them, the culmination for me is painting them.'

Some of the pieces in this show depict plants that Emma has grown from seed after trips to places as far flung as Patagonia. 'To know something about the collectors and explorers who risked their lives to bring us these treasures adds to the romance of gardening; there is half a lifetime of friendships and places in some of these plants.' ▷

—

'Plants with Provenance' is at The Fine Art Society until December 10 (faslondon.com). Watercolours start at £500



© THE FINE ART SOCIETY; BEN WOOD



THE WORLD OF

MARK CROPPER

Chairman of paper manufacturer James Cropper

The company was founded by my great-great-great-grandfather in 1845. To this day, we are based in the same place – Burneside Mills in the Lake District – which has been a site of industrial activity since the Middle Ages. Paper-making began here in 1753.

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A highlight of this year was *PaperBridge*, an installation by the artist Steve Messam in a remote Lake District valley (above). It was built from 22,000 sheets of the red paper we make for the Remembrance Day poppies.

I visited Japan for the first time in February. We loved their wonderful paper culture. I dragged the family into every paper shop in every town and had to buy an extra suitcase to bring home all the amazing papers I bought.

James Cropper: jamescropper.com

EXHIBITIONS



ARTIST AND EMPIRE

The term 'empire' is highly provocative in the twenty-first century. This exhibition at Tate Britain brings together over 200 paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures, setting out to examine the people who helped to create, promote or confront the British Empire in their work. *Until April 10; tate.org.uk*

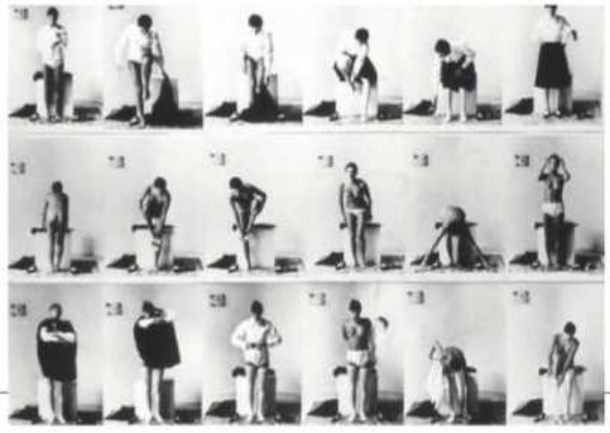


ROYAL INSTITUTE OF OIL PAINTERS ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Oil painting in all its forms is celebrated at the Mall Galleries. The exhibition highlights the many ways in which artists use the medium, and includes works by Malcolm Ashman and Susan Bower. *Until December 13; mallgalleries.org.uk*

FABIO MAURI

The Italian artist's career spanned five decades and multiple mediums, from drawing and painting to sculpture, performance, film and theatre. This month, Hauser & Wirth's London gallery presents a retrospective of his work, much of which is concerned with the rise of Fascism and the Holocaust. *December 11–February 6; hauserwirth.com*



FROM TOP Yousuf Karsh, *Sir John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada*, 1937. Malcolm Ashman, *Dartmoor*, 2015. Fabio Mauri, *Ideologia e Natura*, 1973, performance at Galleria Duemila, Bologna. BELOW FROM LEFT German writing cabinet in rococo style, c.1750-55. Stoneware jug, c.1780-1800

IAN THOMAS/V&A IMAGES; © VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON; © STEVE MESSAM 2015; © SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY; ELISABETTA CATALANO

UPDATE



This month, the V&A will unveil its new Europe galleries which, after a £12.5 million restoration, will display the museum's collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European art and design.

Hard matters

EMILY TOBIN looks at the work of three sculptors who create pieces from stone and its composites

Heavy, unyielding and often impenetrable, stone does not lend itself to being easily worked, and yet sculptors gravitate towards this temperamental material. Perhaps it is the allure of a challenge, or its timelessness, monumentality and permanence. Whatever the appeal, there is a certain lyricism with which sculptors talk about stone. Michelangelo declared that 'every block has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it', while Barbara Hepworth loved marble for 'its radiance in the light, its hardness, precision and response to the sun'. Remarkably, sculptors working today are still able to coax out new and imaginative forms from this material, creating works that are tactile, aesthetic and that bridge the gap between art and nature.



ALMUTH TEBBENHOFF

Eduardo Paolozzi spotted the work of Almuth Tebbenhoff in the late Seventies. He was so impressed by her pots and surreal sculptures that he invited her to unofficially use the facilities at the Royal College of Art, which, says Almuth, 'opened everything up for me. It was there I learnt to question my own choices and decisions'.

Almuth had previously shied away from stone – 'it was too hard, too heavy, too dense and too difficult'. But, following a scholarship in Pietrasanta in Italy, where she was taught how to carve marble by master craftsmen, she fell in love with the process. While some artists relish the weight of stone, Almuth concedes that she has always fought with the material and yet, miraculously, she brings a certain lightness to her sculptures. She does her marble work in Italy, right at the source, where the harsh, bright sunlight shows up every bump and unintended unevenness, and so much the better, for her work invites you to savour every smooth surface and clean line. *Prices start at around £4,000; tebbenhoff.org*

BEN GASKELL

Ben Gaskell's handsome hard-stone pieces are deceptively simple. Exquisitely finished but, as he says, 'not decorated or fussed over', their modesty of form belies a long and messy process of 'scratching, bashing and polishing'. Though they vary in shape and size, his works tend towards slick cubes and rhomboids; on first glance, they are solid, impenetrable blocks, but on closer inspection they are cleft in two by a fissure that slices across the stone. Ben spent 10 years as a trader in raw rock crystal, so is well acquainted with the 'gem-trading entrepôts of the world' and knows where to find his favoured agate, porphyries and black Swedish dolerite – which he chooses because they are 'hard, durable and structurally competent'. Though he is not formally trained, Ben has spent 'thousands of hours' working on the restoration, repair or copying of antique hard-stone objects, and this, rather than college, has given him 'the best and most stubbornly realistic' discipline to teach him his trade. *Prices start at £10,000; adriansassoon.com*



HILDA HELLSTRÖM

Hilda Hellström works in Welsh anthracite and Jesmonite; the latter, strictly speaking, is a composite, though it shares many of the same qualities as stone. Hilda's classically proportioned urns seem to contain entire universes in their surface – undulating coloured strata form swirling shades of midnight blue, cut through with turquoise, pink and sometimes red. The effect is rather like looking at a mythical landscape from a stratospheric height. 'There is this idea that stone is a rigid material,' says Hilda, 'but, like everything else, it is in constant movement, yet at a much slower pace – and that's what intrigues me.' Hilda trained at the Royal College of Art in London, but has since returned to her native Sweden, where she now works from a converted ceramics factory. *Prices start at £800; hildahellstrom.se* □



FROM TOP Almuth Tebbenhoff, *In One Hundred Light Years Turn Left*, 60cm diameter, marble. Hilda Hellström, *Sedimentation Urn*, 43 x 17cm diameter, Jesmonite. Ben Gaskell, Box carved from Egyptian Red Porphyry, 8.5 x 9.4 x 9.7cm



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The world of Max Deliss, a restorer of oil paintings

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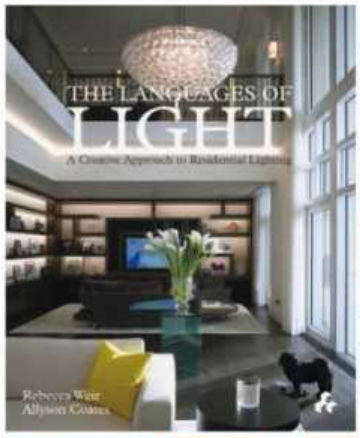
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Words & pictures

What to read: the latest books chosen by ROSE DAHLSEN

THE LANGUAGES OF LIGHT: A CREATIVE APPROACH TO RESIDENTIAL LIGHTING
Rebecca Weir and Allyson Coates (Artifice, £29.95)

After woefully neglecting the lighting in our otherwise beautifully designed pre-children flat, we made a beeline for Rebecca Weir and Light IQ when it came to rebuilding our current house. The calm, intelligent and practical approach she uses in her work is there in abundance in *The Languages of Light*. Written with Allyson Coates, this work has the distinction of being at once useful and beautiful. It is a comprehensive resource – there's even a glossary – yet avoids being a manual. The writing is sensitive and intelligent, weaving psychology and the forces of nature into a sophisticated and, at times, technical discourse – covering subjects as diverse as garden lighting and avoiding the 'black mirror effect' on glass windows. The chapters on lighting techniques and case studies make great use of beautiful, minimally styled photography to illustrate all the tricks of the trade – from coffered ceilings and wall-washing to shadow gaps. Readers will wonder how they managed without this book which, like Rebecca, has become my friend. **Kate Slesinger**

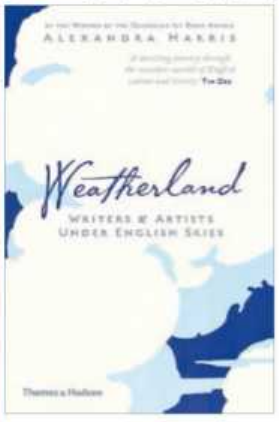




GARDEN DESIGN SOLUTIONS: IDEAS FOR OUTDOOR SPACES
Stephen Woodhams (Jacqui Small, £25)

Stephen Woodhams possesses a wealth of experience in the design world and this book brings together an eclectic mix of his own projects, both in this country and abroad. Useful for anyone planning a new garden, the book is weighted towards elements of hard landscaping rather than planting, including sections on boundaries, focal points, lighting and water features, among others. Spatial design and planning is covered, with plans shown alongside photographs of the finished spaces. There are plenty of interesting ideas to take away: for example, the design for a small courtyard with alternating bands of paving and pebbles, with the pebble bands narrowing towards the house to create a false perspective. I particularly liked a set of elegant pots made from rendered and painted concrete rings, and Stephen's interesting use of living walls for small urban courtyards. This is a great sourcebook for anyone needing garden inspiration, with friendly and apposite advice from an expert. **Clare Foster**





PATTERNITY A NEW WAY OF SEEING: THE INSPIRATIONAL POWER OF PATTERN
Anna Murray and Grace Winteringham (Conran Octopus, £30)

In 2009, product designer Grace Winteringham and art director Anna Murray started Patternity, an online gallery of pattern-related imagery. They collaborate with furniture and fashion brands, and put together talks and exhibitions on the subject. *A New Way of Seeing* is not a technical book, and it is not particularly concerned with pattern as surface decoration. Rather, it is a brilliant collection of picture references interspersed with musings on the nature of pattern. The visual content largely consists of images of nature or everyday life juxtaposed with stills from the fashion world. A seething mass of centipedes shot by Tim Flach sits opposite a catwalk still from Iris van Herpen that is just as skin-crawling. This is an uplifting tour of pattern-related subjects, with brief introductions to Fibonacci, Mandelbrot, the golden ratio, chaos theory and Buddhist ideas. While the core is visual and the content is largely fashion-orientated, they give a wide-eyed leaping-off point into the subjects they touch upon. **Ruth Sleightholme**

WEATHERLAND: WRITERS AND ARTISTS UNDER ENGLISH SKIES
Alexandra Harris (Thames & Hudson, £24.95)

Weathered furniture may be fashionable, but we live in an age remote from weather, with our air conditioning and underfloor heating. To our forebears, extreme weathers inspired both fear and romance. Dr Alexandra Harris, English lecturer at the University of Liverpool, has traced the effects of weather on religion, mythology, literature and art, from the Dark Ages to the present day. It was always cold and stormy in Anglo-Saxon poems; 'physical conquest of all that was monstrous in mist and mere' was the making of a warrior, as well as a holy man, she explains. In the works of Shakespeare and the Brontë sisters, the weather often reflects a character's behaviour and moods. It seems it did not get hot in English literature until the twentieth century – think *The Go-Between* and *The Cement Garden*. Meticulously researched from original documents, the book is thick with fascinating information and really needs reading twice to take it in. **Hugh St Clair** □

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Pick a pocket or two

VIOLA LANARI has a selection of tactile, textured fabrics up her sleeve

PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDERS GRAMER**

TOP ROW FROM LEFT 'Big Herringbone' (rose), by Sequana, wool, £150, from Tissus d'Hélène. **'Lowlands'** (blood orange), wool, £156, from Holland & Sherry. **'Tweed Couleurs'** (navy orange), by Dominique Kieffer for Rubelli, cotton mix, £108, from Rubelli. **MIDDLE ROW FROM LEFT 'Noise'** (742), wool/nylon, £189, from Kvadrat/Raf Simons. **'Bogardine'** (ottanio), viscose mix, £112.50, from Dedar. **BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT 'Alpilles'** (red), wool mix, £119.20, from Casamance. **'Sonar 2'** (633), wool mix, £232, from Kvadrat/Raf Simons. **'Phinda Ré Douze'**, wool mix, from €475, from Toyine Sellers. **BACKGROUND 'Cashmere Donegal'** (pink), £540, from Holland & Sherry. *All prices per metre* ▷

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RENOVATION STORY

A London couple's quest to create a characterful home. *houseandgarden.co.uk/renovationfiles*



WINDOW SEATS

Pretty and practical ideas for a room with a view. *houseandgarden.co.uk/windowseats*



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PHOTOGRAPHS: WILLIAM LINGWOOD; PAUL MASSEY; MICHAEL NEWINGTON-GRAY; SARAH HOGAN



TOP ROW FROM LEFT 'Signal' (teal), cotton mix, £62, from Kirkby Design. **'Alpilles'** (yellow), wool mix, £119.20, from Casamance. **MIDDLE ROW FROM LEFT 'Caniche'** (lapis), cotton mix, £90, from Zinc Textile. **'Huckleberry'** (nougat), wool, £173, from de Le Cuona. **'Coda 2'** (410), by Norway Says & Per Bjørnsen, wool/nylon, £160, from Kvadrat. **BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT 'Big Herringbone'** (sea green), by Sequana, wool, £150, from Tissus d'Hélène. **'Wool Dot'** (sterling), wool mix, £252, from J Robert Scott. **BACKGROUND 'Savile Row'** (blue canard), by Métaphores, wool/linen, £103.60, from Abbott & Boyd. *All prices per metre. For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □


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Window dressings

Far from being a last thought, curtains and blinds can offer just as much to the design of a room as the furniture. GABBY DEEMING sheds light on some of the best options

BACK IN FASHION Ruched blinds are shaking off their Eighties associations and making a comeback. Some rooms require a relaxed edge and these provide that softness. This one is in 'Sophie' from Borderline, £76 a metre – a simple linen print that looks charming and not at all like a Viennetta. *borderlinefabrics.com* ▷

PAUL RAESIDE

KEEP IT SIMPLE



NATURAL HABITAT These raw silk curtains, designed by Poonam Khanna for B W Architects, blend well with the wood panelling to create a barely-there look in this Manhattan townhouse. A slim header tape, gently gathered, keeps the look simple. *bw-architects.com*



DOUBLE VISION Atelier AM has created an elegant look in this Californian bedroom by using thin black double curtain poles to layer a sheer and a heavier linen. Triple inverted pinch pleats were chosen for the headers. Ikea's Racka collection offers both double and triple pole combinations, from £18. *atelieram.com* | *ikea.com*

If you don't want your curtains to take centre stage, opt for a plain fabric and have fun with the decorative details



VINTAGE CHARM These antique linen curtains have an unusual shirred pencil-pleat heading, which is created using shirring tape. The result is a pleasingly gathered look that is similar to – but softer than – a plain pencil pleat. Parna is a great source for antique linen, from £60 for a 208 x 126cm sheet. *parna.co.uk*

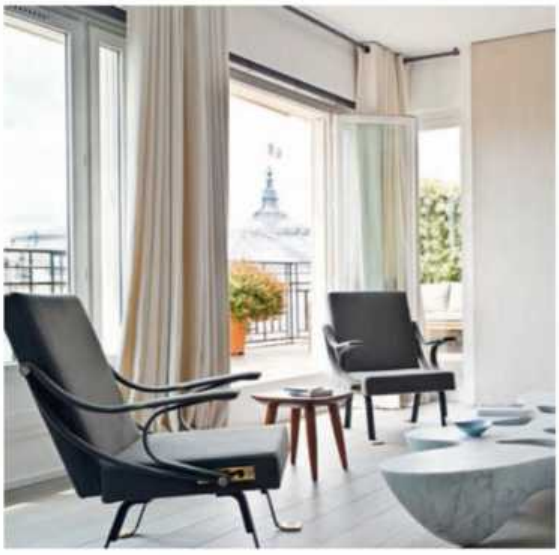


HIGH RISE A bank of floor-to-ceiling windows in this house in the West Country has been dressed by designer Hugh Henry, of Mlinaric, Henry & Zervudachi, in cream linen for a look of understated grandeur. For similar, ask for a hand-gathered heading with soft stand-up and a length that 'breaks' on the floor. *mhzlondon.com*

NGOC MINH NGO; SIMON UPTON; TIM BEDDOW; FRANCOIS HALARD



TIME FOR RECESS The owner of this bedroom wanted a moody feel, so designer Suzy Hoodless hung grey linen curtains with large pencil pleats from a recessed ceiling track. This keeps out the light and is neater than a pole. Try Silent Gliss for track, from £15.98 for 125cm. *suzyhoodless.com* | *silentgliss.co.uk*



WALL TO WALL In this Parisian apartment, designer François Champsaur chose a sophisticated off-white Belgian linen from Bruder, hung from a continuous bespoke pole, to dress the tall windows. Grommets – large eyelets – give them an architectural look and are economical on fabric. *champsaur.com* | *bruderco.be*

The ideal length for curtains can be a contentious issue. If in doubt, a good rule of thumb is to let the fabric just 'break' on the floor



PLAIN SAILING Designer Amanda Hornby has toned down these patterned walls with duck-egg blue interlined linen curtains with triple pleat headings, hung from a simple white pole. If you are undecided about the amount of fabric falling on the floor, try slightly 'baggy trousers' as shown. *amandahornby.com*

QUICK TRICKS

These simple heading ideas can be applied to a hemmed fabric panel, a linen sheet or a tablecloth to create smart curtains with little or no stitching



'Pleating rings', from £9 each, from Walcot House. *walcothouse.com*



Metal curtain clips, 'Anneaux-pince', £15 for 12, from Caravane. *caravane.fr*



Stitch on fabric tabs for a look that is relaxed and sophisticated. The 'Maya' curtain panels from Caravane are similar to the one shown here ▷

SHARYN CAIRNS; STEPHAN JULLIARD; FRITZ VON DER SCHULENBURG; ALEXANDER JAMES

PLAY WITH PATTERN



CREWEL TRICK Designer Maria Speake of Retrouvius often uses antique textiles as a starting point for window dressings; in this instance, the embroidered panel is an early form of crewelwork, combined with natural and teal coloured linens to make a single curtain 6.5 metres long. *retrouvius.com*



RUN FOR COVER A fabric-covered track, known as a lath and fascia, reduces the light that comes through, so is effective in bedrooms and on bay windows. Kit Kemp has used Bennison Fabrics' 'Cherry Tree' linen, £197 a metre, in this bedroom at the Covent Garden Hotel. *bennisonfabrics.com | firmdale.com*

'Curtains are a great way of introducing colour and pattern into a room, and I love the warmth that fabric offers' — Kit Kemp



LAYER UP A reeded pole houses a concealed track for a cleaner look. The layered effect of a pinoleum blind, a roman blind and light linen curtains in 'Lamerton', £105 a metre, from Colefax and Fowler, is a great way to pack in textiles without creating an overcrowded look. *colefax.com*



CENTRE STAGE This 'Deniz' linen/cotton from Lee Jofa at G P & J Baker, £115 a metre, is no shrinking violet, so using a pencil pleat heading works well. Combining the curtains with a roman blind in a small pattern creates a decorated look, but the simple shapes stop it looking fussy. *gpandjbaker.com* ▷

PAUL MASSEY; CAROLYN BARBER; PAUL RAESIDE

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CONCEALED FIXINGS



GATHER TOGETHER The soft gathered pelmet and thick jacquard curtains in this bedroom, designed by Piers Westenholz, are perfect for a country bedroom. When rooms are not especially high, it looks good if the pelmet goes right up to the ceiling, as seen here. *westenholz.co.uk*



PLAIN PERFECTION In this children's bedroom by Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay, a fixed and shaped box pelmet with curtains in a pale blue fabric is a smart choice in both senses of the word; it will not be quickly outgrown as children become teenagers and it looks modern and elegant. *henrifitzwilliamlay.com*

'In bedrooms, people can be particular about keeping the light out and pelmets are very useful for this' — Hugh Leslie



ELEVATED STYLE These Italian strung curtains, in the bedroom of a Ludlow townhouse designed by Caroline Harrowby, have a goblet-pleated header design. They are fixed in position at the top and then drawn up and down using a cord. The look is quite traditional and very pretty. *harrowbydesigns.co.uk*



NEUTRAL TERRITORY For this pelmet and curtains, designer Hugh Leslie chose a plain textured linen and inset a decorative braid for detail. The central pleat on the pelmet prevents the whole thing from looking too flat. A design where the central third of the pelmet is longer than the sides also looks good. *hughleslie.com*

SIMON UPTON; SIMON BROWN; PAUL MASSEY; ALEXANDER JAMES

BLIND SPOT



SOFT OPTION In this nineteenth-century Belgian farmhouse, designer Bernard De Clerck has used soft roman blinds in unlined white linen for a relaxed and pretty look in a sitting room, where keeping out the light is not a priority. LinenMe sells similar fabric, from £14.99 a metre. *bernarddeclerck.be | linenme.com*



SAY YES TO YELLOW There are many reasons why this silk taffeta blind is so successful in this Mayfair flat. The yellow adds punch to the room, and designer Chester Jones points out that 'the unlined fabric allows light to filter through for warmth during the day, yet is sufficiently opaque for privacy at night'. *chesterjones.com*

Blinds use a fraction of the fabric needed for curtains, but the variety of styles and textiles available means they don't have to fall short on impact



PERFECT PAIR Anne-Marie Midy and Jorge Almada of Casamidy chose Jim Thompson's cotton 'Gemstone' fabric, £72 a metre, to create a pair of jewel-like lined roman blinds in their Brussels house. Investing in a statement fabric means that the rest of the room can bask in simplicity. *casamidy.com | jimthompson.com*



For more ideas for curtains and blinds, visit **houseandgarden.co.uk/window dressings**

ROLL UP This blind is an unstiffened roller in 'Wheat Ears and Scrolls Border', £580 a metre, an embroidered cotton panel from Chelsea Textiles. 'It is particularly pretty with the light coming through, which is good for a bathroom,' says designer Emma Burns of Sybil Colefax & John Fowler. *chelseatextiles.com | sibylcolefax.com* □

JEAN-FRANCOIS JAUSSAUD; PAUL MASSEY; SIMON UPTON

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Rita Notes

RITA KONIG recommends choosing bed linen and bedding with care

PHOTOGRAPH **CRAIG FORDHAM**



Rita in her bedroom with pillowcases from D Porthault and the Monogrammed Linen Shop

There are a handful of things that are really worth buying in the sales and one of them is bed linen. I have been buying linen for many years – and most of it while it was on sale; I would never have been able to acquire such a good collection otherwise.

Although I am a total sheet snob, I have never been terribly interested in thread counts but more about how things feel. Getting into bed at the end of the day is made so much better if you are climbing between really soft, crisp sheets. If you are looking for the best, in my opinion, the Italians make the finest linens. Most of mine are from the Monogrammed Linen Shop (monogrammed linenshop.com), which sells fantastic sets of percale sheets, linens by D Porthault (dporthaultparis.com), and beautiful things from France and Italy.

D Porthault is something of an obsession for me, one that my husband has sadly curbed – men do look slightly silly in a bed made up in pink hearts. Since I have rarely been able to afford an entire bed of D Porthault, I have always been a great advocate of combining its pillowcases with plain white percale sheets from companies such as The White House (thewhitehouselinen.co.uk). I actually think this is a better look. I often buy the pillowcases in sales and occasionally I have found sets on eBay. At the time of writing this, eBay has divine baby pillowcases in a violet print on linen and pink clovers in percale that, on this small size of pillowcase, would be relatively easy to get past a beady-eyed husband. D Porthault now has a concession at Harrods (harrods.com), which is not a bad place to head.

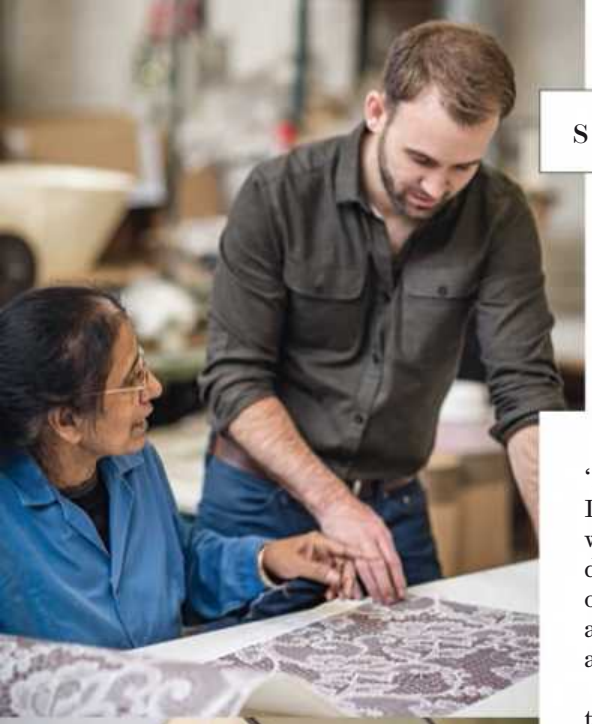
If sending sheets to the laundry isn't your thing, companies like Society Limonta (societylimonta.com) and Libeco (libeco.com) are good options. They make beautiful sheets in heavy linen that doesn't need ironing. It is a fashionable look that is all over Pinterest; I do love that Belgium-meets-Montauk look of bone-white crumpled linen on a low bed. The Conran Shop (conranshop.co.uk) also sells a version of it, as does Cologne & Cotton (cologneandcotton.com).

There are two schools of thought on pillows. I have always been a standard and a square person, simply because I like leaning back and having the support of a square pillow. But two standard pillows is probably a neater look. One thing that's certain is it is worth spending the most that you can on pillows. I don't think you really want anything other than the softest white Hungarian goose down. Basically Siberian, Polish or any of those chilly Eastern European places are good.

> I like leaning back and having the support of a square pillow

The other thing that I like doing with crisp linen is having a vintage quilt or Welsh blanket on the bed. Katharine Pole (katharinepole.com) always has beautiful vintage French quilts and Guinevere Antiques (guinevere.co.uk) in the King's Road has an entire room at the back dedicated to vintage linens and quilts, which are perfect for mixing in if you don't like it all looking too neat and tidy. The Conran Shop has beautiful vintage Welsh blankets from Blodwen (blodwen.com). The Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair at Battersea Park (January 19–24) is also a good place for this sort of thing. Katharine Pole has a stand and I have bought beautiful quilts from her at the fair in the past. You can also visit her stand every Friday at Portobello Road Market □

STYLING: ARTA GHANBARI







SPECIALIST

COPPER & SILK

ROSE DAHLSEN meets Daniel Fosbery, the young entrepreneur and designer behind a London company that creates traditional, handmade lampshade and lighting designs

PHOTOGRAPHS **CHRIS TERRY**

'I think of this place as a kitchen,' says Daniel Fosbery of the 6,500-square-metre workshop of his lampshade- and lighting-design company, Copper & Silk. 'The orders come in, the ingredients are here and each department knows more than I do about how to make their individual part.'

Tucked into the corner of a nondescript trading estate in north-west London, the exterior offers little clue to the scope of ingredients or throng of activity inside: baskets stashed with copper rings line the walls; rolls of coloured silks jostle for space on shelves; and clusters of lampshade skeletons pave the floor. While Daniel masterminds the designs, he relies on a team of 25 craftspeople to bring the elements together.

In 2007, two years after finishing his degree in contemporary furniture design at the then Buckinghamshire Chilterns University, Daniel landed a job at a prestigious lighting company. He looked after its bespoke projects until 2010, when he decided to set up on his own at the age of 26. Unlike furniture, lighting had a magical 'electrical element, that fourth dimension' that captivated him.

The building has been a lampshade factory for 30 years – the original company now shares the site with Copper & Silk. The staff are employed by both, and some have been hand-crafting lampshades here for 15 years. Three metalworkers rotate between three machines to spot-weld the ring components onto copper-coated wire, before powder-coating the frame. A neighbouring table is used for laminating fabric onto card for a smooth finish.

As it is carried into the adjacent room, an unpinned crimson slice of silk floats from its frame like a floundering jellyfish. Here, the 'soft shades' (in fabric rather than card) are made – Copper & Silk remains one of only a few companies making them. The clangour of copper welding is replaced with the gentle whirr of sewing machines underneath soft chattering as the seamstresses pleat with precision. Swatches of fabric – either douppion, shantung or satin silk imported from India, or linen from Ireland – are stretched over the frames, before being cut, hand-stitched, puckered and pinned into a box, gathered, knife or loosely gathered pleat style.

Removed from the ground-floor bustle in a room overlooking the workshop is a quieter zone where an unfinished 'Oast' ceiling light is splayed on a work bench. Its finished form – comprised of up to 120 pieces, including 117 struts – can be seen in Daniel's own dining room. In its partially complete state, a dozen segments of bowed birch branch out like spiders' legs. 'It's like a jigsaw,' Daniel says with a smile. He also uses this space for applying the finishing touches, from distressing metal to stains and paints – his favourite part of the process.

Although the wood-working and glass-working of the lamp structures are done elsewhere in the UK, Daniel remains closely informed about the method. 'I've got first-hand experience with a lot of processes and I'm a bit of a geek about the whole thing. I'm always pulling things apart as I have to know how everything is made,' he says.

He also brings in fresh ideas through collaborations: textile designer Ptolemy Mann's ikat prints and Emily Humphrey's whimsical animal and flower designs have adorned shades. Copper & Silk also works with lighting retailers and interior designers on bespoke projects, such as creating solid-brass chandeliers for Manolo Blahnik's store in Harrods. Its website allows customers to create over 70,000 lampshade combinations by selecting the shape, finish, size, fabric, lining and fitting, before sending the order to the factory to be made. Daniel admits that his favourite designs are 'always the new ones, because I love the challenge that each project brings'. This insatiable quest for the new, blended with years of heritage, is a formula that should see this kitchen create for years to come □

Copper & Silk: copperandsilk.com

THIS PAGE FROM TOP Daniel discusses a printed lace graphic with a member of the team. Tucking douppion silk into a frame. Ptolemy Mann's ikat design being pulled into pleats. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A 'Taza' lamp base. Stretching satin silk. Fixing a birch arm on the 'Oast' pendant. Templates for card shades. Empire-shade frames. A 'Manhattan' lamp. 'Candle French Drum' shades. Copper fittings. Daniel with frames












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Sunshine state of mind

As the executive director of Design Miami, RODMAN PRIMACK is playing a key role in the transformation of a city once more associated with sun-worshippers and senior citizens into an international centre of design and art

TEXT **DAVID NICHOLLS** | PHOTOGRAPHS **MARK LUSCOMBE-WHYTE**



Rodman Primack (on right) and his husband Rudy Weissenberg at the Cape Florida Light in Miami-Dade County







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT Rodman with Tiffany Chestler, director of cultural programming at Dacra for the Miami Design District (a sign for which is pictured top centre), in front of the *Fly's Eye Dome* structure, designed by Buckminster Fuller (also bottom right). Discussing 'Chromatropic', a new print created in collaboration with Pierre Frey for Design Miami/Basel 2015, with Craig Robins, co-owner of Design Miami. Miami Design District is famed for its street art







THIS PICTURE Lunch at The Cypress Room in Miami Design District with Ximena Caminos, executive creative director of the Faena Group of hotels. BELOW Inside Miami Design District's headquarters

As the sun prepares to set over Key Biscayne in Miami, Rodman Primack leads the way towards a local landmark: a nineteenth-century lighthouse which, like many of the Sunshine State's residents of a certain age, is remarkably well preserved. The Cape Florida Light is an icon of Miami-Dade County, and like the art deco buildings in ice-cream shades that line the tourist-laden Ocean Drive, it has long played a role in how the world views – and visits – Miami.

But Rodman, the executive director of the Design Miami fair, is at the forefront of a movement that is broadening the world's perception of the Florida city. Founded in 2005, Design Miami is staged twice a year – each June in Switzerland as Design Miami Basel, and in Miami itself each December. For the dealers and designers that take part, it is a chance to sell to a high concentration of the fabulously wealthy. For the latter, it's an opportunity to add to their collections in a sun-drenched atmosphere fizzing with excitement and Perrier-Jouët. Last year, Design Miami attracted nearly 36,000 visitors and included exhibitions involving the likes of architects Daniel Libeskind and Peter Marino, and French fashion brand Louis Vuitton.

Rodman joined Design Miami in early 2014 after serving as chairman of the London auction house Phillips de Pury. Prior to that, he was director of the Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills. There was a stint at Christie's, too, as head specialist of Latin American art, and a period working under Peter Marino in New York. Somehow, between all of this, he also built up a successful interior-design practice and textiles business, which he continues to run out of New York. You could say all of this was always on the cards for a little boy in California who, at the age of eight, suggested to his parents that he would rather like to have a subscription to *Architectural Digest*. 'Even at that age, I was so driven by a desire to have life look like this,' he says.

A life like this involves a lot of travel. 'Over the past five weeks, I've been to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Zurich, London, Barcelona, Paris, New York and Milan,' Rodman says, uncertain if he's missed a city or two. This is all part of his job: meeting with designers and gallerists and spreading the word about Design Miami. A few days after my visit, he's off to Hong Kong and Shanghai.

As for Rodman's home, the very idea of it is similarly peripatetic. His husband Rudy Weissenberg, a former television producer who now works in his family's commodity businesses, as well as curating exhibitions, is predominantly based in his native Guatemala City. And they are no strangers to the two-and-a-half-hour flight between the two cities.



Rodman and Rudy's home when they touch down in Miami is a Thirties bungalow on one of Biscayne Bay's tiny Venetian Islands. Miami is in the middle of a construction boom, and this is apparent even here as older houses are gradually giving way to plus-size replacements. 'Over the past few years, the property market has gone crazy, with modest, normal houses being remodelled into McMansions,' Rodman laments. 'Super charming places like this are few and far between these days.'

He is right: their house is charming. When they bought it in 2009, they focused on redecorating rather than remodelling, although they did replace the swimming pool – once they had cleared away the collection of shopping trollies amassed by the eccentric previous owner in the garden.

Given who lives here now, it is no surprise to discover that the two-bedroom house has been decorated with considerable flair. The colours sing and patterns abound: stripes and zigzags, florals, geometrics and ethnic prints. ▷







THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT One of two sitting rooms in Rodman and Rudy's house. The couple in the garden. A photograph by Luis González Palma in their bedroom. The Florida room, with a hippo-shape footstool by Renate Müller. One of Rodman's fabric designs lines a wall of their bedroom. OPPOSITE Bold colours and prints enliven the sitting room













In the main bedroom, the walls are covered in one of Rodman's fabric designs, based on historic Japanese woodblock prints. And there is no shortage of eye-catching pieces of art and furniture – from the cartoonish Michele de Lucchi table in the dining area to a hippo-shape footstool by Renate Müller in what is known as the 'Florida room' overlooking the pool. This latter space has windows on three sides, although two of these have been covered by enormous cardboard installations by the contemporary Constructivist artist Florian Baudrexel. 'There's too much light in Miami,' Rodman says, explaining the artworks' positioning. While this is a somewhat difficult concept to grasp for someone who lives in London, I take him at his word.

The couple entertain regularly and, although it is hard to fathom how, they manage to make space every December for a party for more than 100 guests. By their own admission, their social and professional lives tend to blur. Rodman has dinners to host and openings to attend most evenings of the week: 'Work is completely integrated into life. There isn't the feeling of leaving at 6pm and being done.'

A short drive away and nestled between the arty Wynwood neighbourhood and Little Haiti is the Miami Design District – 18 blocks of formerly largely unused warehouses and industrial facilities that, over the past 15 years, have been transformed into an area rich in galleries, smart restaurants and international boutiques. It has become a new destination in the city and, for many, it has made a destination of the city itself. Responsible for this is Craig Robins, who co-owns the Miami Design District and is CEO of the property development company Dacra. Additionally, as co-owner of Design Miami, Craig is Rodman's boss.

While the majority of Design Miami is held in Miami Beach, the Design District also takes part, with resident businesses staging exhibitions, pop-up shops taking over still-vacant spaces and outdoor installations set up in public areas. Rodman's Design Miami office is based within the district's impressive headquarters, and it is from here that he devises and executes his plans for the fair: 'It's a job that is really aggregating my interests.' He clearly loves it. 'When I worked in art, 90 per cent of my conversations were business discussions, and it's the opposite in the design world. The dealers I work with aren't here to be "masters of the universe" or to become the next Larry Gagosian. It is a smaller market and it's a time of transition, so I find that exciting.'

He's a well-known face in the design district, and from the hellos and friendly nods of recognition that he receives as we walk around some of his favourite spots, it is obvious he is a popular one, too. Perhaps that is because the locals recognise Rodman's supporting role in steering Miami through its own transition to being a city of greater twenty-first-century relevance, and one that is now influencing design and art on an international level. You get a sense that it is a city where things are really happening and where the dreams of an eight-year-old boy who has traversed the world to get here seem to have come true □

Design Miami: designmiami.com

THIS PAGE FROM TOP Rodman at the home of Nina Johnson-Milewski, of Gallery Diet, with the designer Emmett Moore, whom Nina represents. Outside Pérez Art Museum Miami with Leann Standish, who is its acting director. Visiting the pop-up gallery Design Pub, with its curator, Jessica Acosta-Rubio. OPPOSITE Rodman and Rudy having lunch with friends at the home of Andrea Noboa, who is pictured at the top left of the table

Rodman is a well-known face in the design district – and a popular one. Perhaps because locals recognise his role in steering Miami into a city of twenty-first-century relevance





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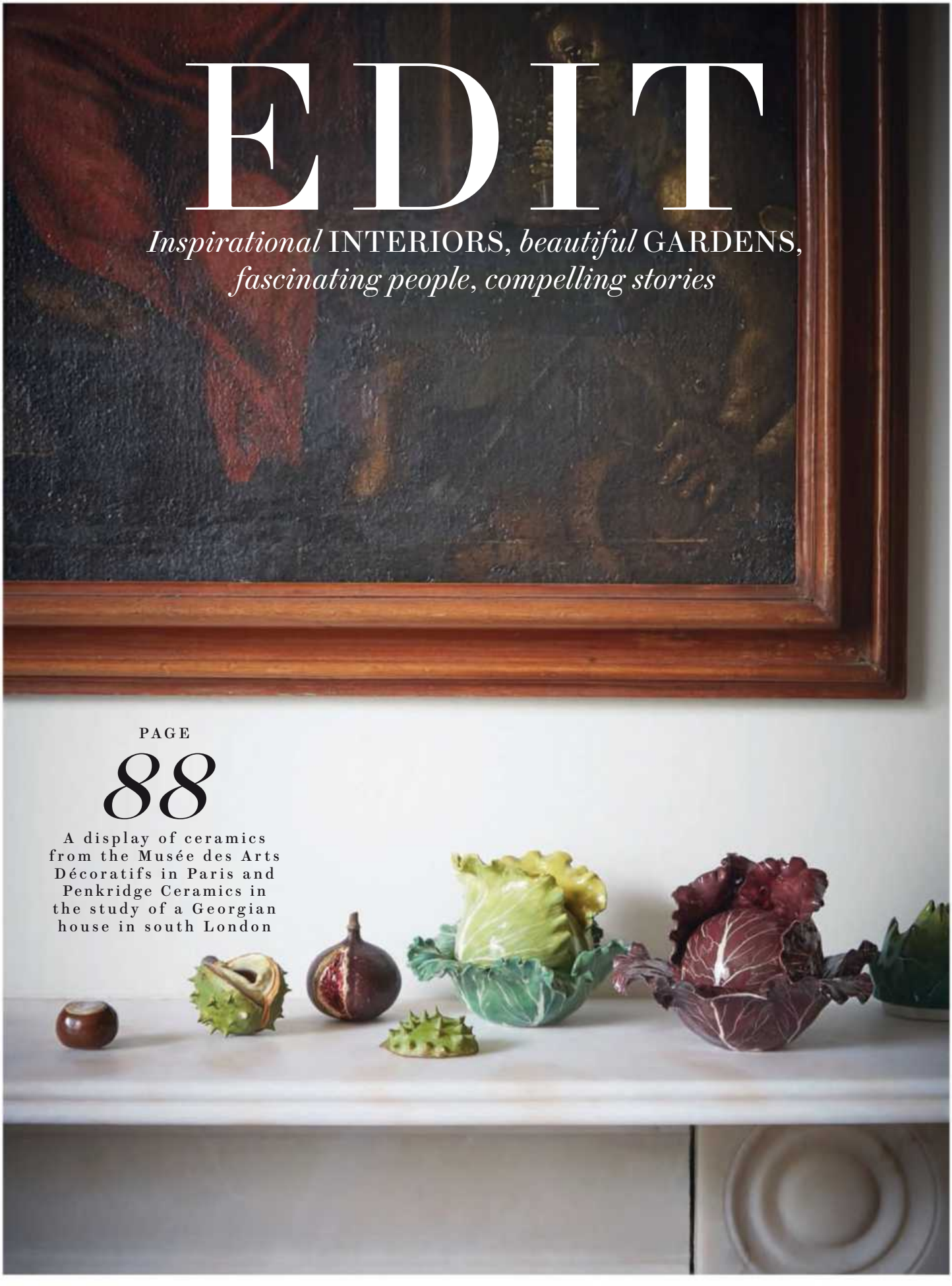
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EDIT

Inspirational INTERIORS, *beautiful* GARDENS,
fascinating people, compelling stories

PAGE
88

A display of ceramics from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and Penkridge Ceramics in the study of a Georgian house in south London



PAUL MASSEY

time for CHANGE



After 10 years in this house in west London, the owners enlisted the help of designer and architect Rabih Hage to reconfigure the layout and redecorate the rooms to reflect changes in their needs and aesthetic sensibility

TEXT **LUCIA VAN DER POST** | PHOTOGRAPHS **SHARYN CAIRNS** | LOCATIONS EDITOR **DAVID NICHOLLS**



Rabih kept to a neutral palette in the first-floor drawing room and created focal points with a photograph by Benjamin Faga of the Arethusa Fountain in London's Bushy Park and a brass table by the Haas Brothers



When the owners of this grand late-nineteenth-century house, situated in a west London square, moved in some 10 years or so ago, they did little more than give it a decorative overhaul. A decade on and much in their lives had changed. They now have a young child, and the five children from their first marriages have grown up and need more autonomous spaces during their frequent visits home.

Aesthetically, too, they had moved on. It was not just that the house had grown slightly shabby in the intervening years, but the owners wanted a look that was cleaner, less ornate and less decorative. They had heard of the work of architect and interior designer Rabih Hage, and they liked the fact that he combined the two disciplines. As an architect, he could rethink the way the house worked and reconfigure its spaces. As an interior designer, he could give the interiors a classic, timeless feel. The owners were also confident that his contacts with artisans and craftsmen could provide the essential touches of magic.

For Rabih, it was a wonderful project. The house was one of the few in the square that had not been divided up into flats. It has large, airy rooms, many complete with original cornicing and chimneypieces, which were both challenging and inspiring due to their scale. But it needed a complete rethink to make it work.

They were lucky that, although the house already had a lower ground floor, they were able to get permission to build another floor below that. This meant that in the new basement, Rabih could provide for the family's leisure activities, with a temperature-controlled wine cellar, a gym, a spa area, a bar and a cinema with seating for eight.

At the front of the house, on the lower ground floor, which has private direct access from the street, Rabih created a self-contained flat with its own small kitchen for the wife's grown-up son. This way he can come and go as he pleases without disturbing the rest of the house. Behind this, there is a room for flower arranging and, at the back, leading out onto the garden, an informal sitting room ideal for watching television, reading and playing games.



BOTH PAGES Rabih had the original cornicing and plasterwork in the drawing room restored, and chose gold silk curtains from Jim Thompson to go with the hessian-effect walls hand painted by Matthew Croxford. Two 'Massimosistema' sofas from Poltrona Frau positioned on either side of the chimneypiece anchor the room, while a pair of Queen Anne chairs reupholstered in 'Romeo & Giulietta' purple velvet from Dedar creates a more intimate sitting area by the window (opposite)

Meanwhile, Rabih had decided the ground floor needed to be completely rethought. The clients loved the grandeur of the entrance hall and wanted marble floors, so Rabih tracked some down in a gentle neutral tone, teamed it with a pale linen paper and, as an alternative to traditional crystal chandeliers, chose two large and lovely papier mâché ones by Studio Job for Moooi. 'Though imposing in size, they add a light – and slightly subversive – touch, which does nothing to affect the grandeur, but stops it being too conventionally opulent,' says Rabih.

He also decided to reverse the rooms on the ground floor, moving the kitchen from the back to the front and the dining room to the back. 'I thought it would be much nicer for the kitchen to face south over the square, so I put a small table by the front window where they can have family breakfasts,' he explains. Since the family is quite large and they do a lot of entertaining, there is a small, professionally equipped area at the back of the kitchen where food can be prepared away from the family. An Ingo Maurer gold-leaf ceiling light hangs over the main area for food preparation, behind which is ample storage for all the kitchen paraphernalia.

The dining room has several functions. It can be a grand setting for entertaining – a quirky light fitting made from metal threads by Terzani hangs over the Victorian table, bought from The Furniture Cave on the King's Road 15 years ago, and there's a made-to-measure Piet Hein Eek sideboard. By the window, there is a smaller table for intimate dinners or tea for two, as well as seating with views out over the garden.

Up on the first floor is the large and beautiful drawing room. Rabih did little to the structure, and focused on repairing the plasterwork and the cornicing, reinstating the dado, smoothing out the walls and putting in an elegant oak floor in a slightly unusual herringbone pattern – the wooden blocks lie at 60 degrees instead of the more usual 45 degrees.

He kept the colour scheme calm and fairly neutral – with sand-coloured hessian-effect walls hand painted by Matthew Croxford of Croxford and Saunders – not only to provide a tranquil background to the art and artefacts, but also because, as Rabih explains, 'the



THIS PAGE The study has bespoke built-in shelves that hold the owners' book collection and artefacts; the door leads to the landing. OPPOSITE ANTICLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT In the kitchen, the main cooking area has a wall of concealed storage in grey-stained oak. Rabih positioned the table by the bay window to allow views over the leafy square (also bottom left). Striped 'Bucket' chairs, designed by Rabih, and an antique Japanese silk screen add colour and texture in the dining room

















wife is a sophisticated and elegant woman with a great wardrobe and I wanted her to be able to shine and not be overpowered by too much colour and decoration'.

The room is anchored by two sofas from Poltrona Frau and a bespoke rug by Denis Colomb, which was made in Nepal. The owners already had some beautiful pictures and artefacts – mostly from the husband's time in the Far East – which needed to be properly displayed. Though the first impression is one of great calm and tranquillity, wherever one looks there are visual delights: antique Chinese pots, vintage lights, gold silk curtains, a classic round rosewood table from Denmark, Queen Anne chairs reupholstered in purple velvet, a chandelier by Jeff Zimmerman and a tall spun floor lamp by Anton Alvarez. The neutral background here is perfect for showcasing the artwork – in particular there is *Diana/Arethusa Fountain*, an arresting large-scale light-box photographic work by Ben Faga, a vertical picture of women's feet by Marilyn Minter and a square white work on paper by Jessica Rankin, while outside on the wall leading up to the second floor is a vast series depicting the Chinese zodiac by Bai Yiluo.

Across the landing, the study has bespoke shelving to display not only the large number of books the couple have collected, but also the Chinese artefacts and Danish blue-and-white porcelain that they own. On the second floor, the husband and wife have a large and airy bedroom, an en suite bathroom and generous dressing areas, as well as a study for the wife. The third floor has three bedrooms, all en suite, one for their young daughter and one for their older daughter, as well as another for guests. Above it all is a vast and gorgeous roof garden with decking, a barbecue and enough space to have a great party.

The result is a house that provides an elegant yet comfortable and practical background to the busy and varied lives of its owners and their large family. As Rabih puts it, 'My work is about resolving the tensions between beauty and comfort.' Here they are resolved quite beautifully □

Rabih Hage: 020-7823 8288; rabih-hage.com



OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT *Animal Destiny* by Bai Yiluo, portraying the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac, is displayed on the wall of the stairs to the second floor. A 'Foster Soft' chair and footstool from Meridiani in the main bedroom. The en suite bathroom is clad in Black Wood marble with a contrasting bespoke Bleu de Savoie marble vanity designed by Rabih. The back garden. THIS PAGE The rooftop garden has iroko decking, a Jacuzzi and plenty of entertaining space



The walls of the sitting room are hung with a pale grey grasscloth, which provides a neutral background for the brightly coloured upholstery, including the flame-coloured ottoman, trimmed with 'Grand Galon Athenee' from Clarence House at Turnell & Gigon, and the mint-green armchair from Pentreath & Hall

PERSONAL PROJECT



For architectural and interior designer Ben Pentreath, deciding how to decorate his own flat in Bloomsbury was more of a challenge than designing for a client, but the result is a welcoming space that combines traditional elements with modern and individual touches

TEXT **CAROLINE CLIFTON-MOGG** | PHOTOGRAPHS **JAKE CURTIS** | LOCATIONS EDITOR **LIZ ELLIOT**



Ben Pentreath – the architectural and interior designer and shopkeeper – is very much a designer for today. Young, relaxed and funny, he has an innate, almost intuitive understanding of how people want to live now. His look is understated and comfortable, yet informed and smart – perfectly encapsulated in the Bloomsbury flat where he lives with his husband, Charlie McCormick.

Pentreath Central is on the top floor of a peaceful Georgian building belonging to the Art Workers' Guild. The flat is light and bright – an ideal Sunday morning space where you really can smell the coffee, a place that requires no huge effort on the part of the viewer to appreciate its manifest charms.

Ben had known the building for some years and knew that the flat was in need of renovation, so he suggested to the Art Workers' Guild that, in return for a rent-free period, he finance the cost of the refurbishment. The arrangement suited everyone. As he points out, 'The worst thing you can do is to move into a flat that has just been redone by the landlord; the odds are always that you will hate everything that's been done and have to start all over again.'

Once the basic repair work was done, the more nebulous task of deciding how to decorate and furnish began. It was not, at first sight, an easy space: from the main staircase, a small flight of stairs inside the front door leads up to a landing, both now densely hung with pictures and prints. On one side is a small, slick galley kitchen, and on the other is the sitting room, which, as Ben says, is actually the one really nice room. 'It looks out over the square and trees and is very light. The rest of the space is much as you might expect: small and basically quite ordinary.' In other words, ripe for decoration.



FROM TOP Bright cushions, including a cross design from Lindell & Co, decorate the sofa. A corridor leads to the bedrooms and bathroom. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A Fornasetti chest is in a corner of the sitting room. The entrance to the flat is through a white door onto the stairway. A Marianna Kennedy lamp sits on a chest of drawers in the corridor. The compact kitchen




FORTH
DOGGER
HUMBER
DOVER
WIGHT
PLYMOUTH
FINISTERRE
LUNDY
FASTNET
SHANNON
ROCKALL
HEBRIDES
FAIR ISLE
ICELAND


HARE
BURKE





But decorating your own flat is not at all the same as doing it for someone else. 'The difference between doing a scheme for a client, when you have to plan everything in advance with no room for trial and error, and doing it for oneself is that, when it is your own, you take time – sometimes a lot of time – to get it right, making existing pieces fit in and looking for others quite slowly.' So he started with the easiest part first: the sitting room, which he promptly painted white. 'My philosophy with walls is to start off light, live with them, pin up different colours and, if you can, wait for a winter to pass before you finally decide what to cover them with.'

By the following spring, the walls were hung in a pale grey grasscloth. It makes a subtle background for the furniture, which is a clever mix of periods, such as a Regency sideboard and mid-twentieth-century pieces including a Hans J Wegner chair and a favourite Fornasetti 'Palladiana' chest, bought from Themes & Variations gallery. The room is anchored, at one end, by a wall of prints of John Rocque's eighteenth-century map of the cities of London and Westminster and, in the centre, an oversize flame-coloured ottoman. 'Good design – new and old – will always work together,' Ben says.

From the sitting room, a dark and potentially dull corridor leads to the bedrooms and bathroom beyond. But, far from being dull, the corridor is covered from ceiling to skirting with prints, plaster reliefs and books, making it a space to enjoy rather than a walkway to hurry through. Both the bathroom and the two bedrooms are papered. As he explains, 'I like using wallpaper because I love the layers of pattern and colour that it brings to a room.' In the tiny bathroom is overscaled grisaille foliage dressed with monochrome prints; one bedroom has delicate 'Seaweed Lace' from Soane and the other the timeless 'Willow Boughs' by William Morris, one of Ben's favourite designers. 'Timelessness interests me; it's important in both architecture and decoration. I think about longevity and am interested in looking outside what is completely current. Jokey animal heads on the walls are not my thing; nothing dates faster than fashion.'

'I think about longevity and what is not completely current. Nothing dates faster than fashion'

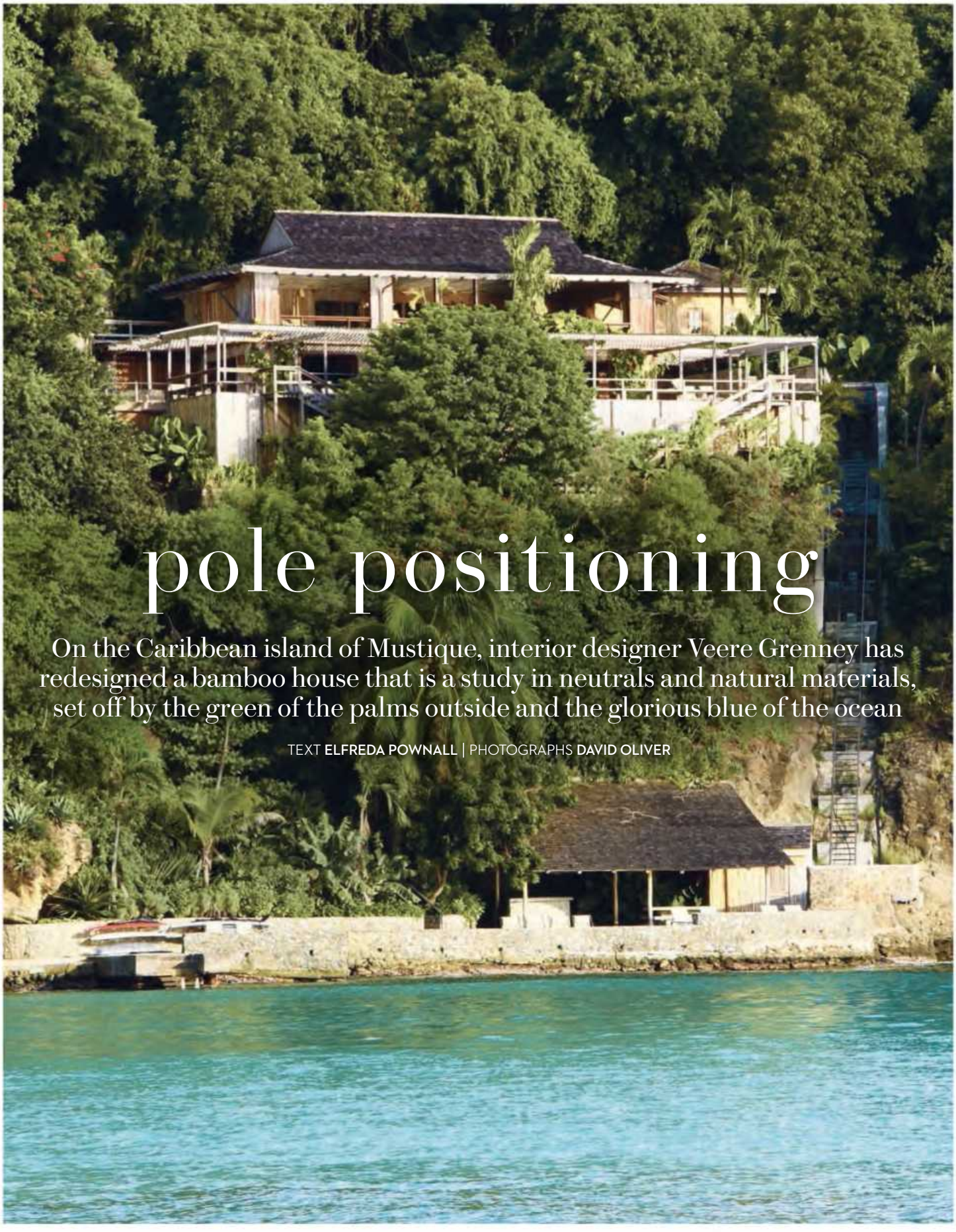
Thus, the flat is contemporary, but also quite traditional. 'Both styles are equally valid simultaneously, but whereas architecture has more rules, more right and wrong, decoration is more fluid. Things that shouldn't work do; even if something jars, it can unexpectedly feel just right. Architecture, of course, is there for ever, but decoration can come and go. Nonetheless, my favourite approach is to mix things that will endure.' Which is, in essence, a pretty intelligent – and certainly timeless – philosophy for design □

Ben Pentreath: 020-7430 2424; benpentreath.com
Pentreath & Hall: 020-7430 2526; pentreath-hall.com





OPPOSITE In the spare room, which leads out to a small terrace, Ben has used several pieces of traditional brown furniture. THIS PAGE FROM ABOVE Soane's delicate 'Seaweed Lace' wallpaper contrasts with the bold blanket in the main bedroom. A collection of monochrome prints chime with the grisaille wallpaper, 'Richmond Park' from Zoffany, in the bathroom



pole positioning

On the Caribbean island of Mustique, interior designer Veere Grenney has redesigned a bamboo house that is a study in neutrals and natural materials, set off by the green of the palms outside and the glorious blue of the ocean

TEXT **ELFREDA POWNALL** | PHOTOGRAPHS **DAVID OLIVER**

THIS PAGE Perched on a hill, the house and garden make the most of the island's lush vegetation, with a stairway that leads down to the outdoor dining area by Gelliceaux Bay beach. OPPOSITE In the main building, the 15-metre-long, open-plan sitting and dining room is decorated in similar neutral hues to the bamboo



Mustique, in the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines group of Caribbean islands, is just 2.2 square miles, yet it exerts a fascination far beyond its size. The 3rd Baron Glenconner, Colin Tennant, who bought the island in 1958 for £45,000, had hoped to grow cotton there. When that plan failed, he decided to make it into an exclusive holiday setting for his friends and divided the island into 120 plots. In 1960, in a brilliant PR coup, he gave the first 10-acre site to his friend Princess Margaret. Her home, Les Jolies Eaux, was decorated in a cosy, Home Counties Peter Jones style, but since then, the island has attracted the mega rich, some of whom look on a plot as their chance to build a fantasy home in the shape of a Roman palazzo, a Japanese temple or a high-tech, futuristic box.

Interior designer Veere Grenney knows Mustique well, and had already designed half a dozen homes for this client before he bought one of the island's most unusual houses in 2007. Veere describes it as 'a beach folly, a little Robinson Crusoe bamboo paradise'. The original house had been built in the Seventies by the Swedish architect Arne Hasselqvist for the American advertising dynamo Mary Wells Lawrence and her airline president husband Harding Lawrence. They used the place almost as a bathing hut for their vast home at the top of the island.

When Veere and his team first encountered the house in 2008, a tropical storm had ripped off some of the roofing and caused a cliff fall below the house. They walked into the main building to discover the original Serge Roche standard lamps encrusted with debris and dust, the shell wall lights wrecked and the bamboo wallcovering looking shabby. With the help of architect Alain Bouvier of ABA, Veere stripped everything back to its bones, expanded the living space, installed a new larger kitchen and reconfigured many of the rooms.

The main building – two separate side pavilions house the main bedroom, spare rooms and children's rooms – includes the great room, a magnificent living space at the top of the house. At 15 metres long, it is a combined sitting and dining area, its walls and pitched ceiling completely re-clad in 10cm-diameter cured bamboo stalks. It is open to the elements on four sides, so sea breezes keep it cool, although storm windows are stored in cupboards for when bad weather threatens. The room faces west and gets beautiful afternoon light and a grandstand view of the daily extravaganza of the Caribbean sunset.

The bamboo, a traditional building material in the Grenadines, came from nearby Saint Vincent, where it is always harvested when the moon is on the wane. The belief is that termites quickly devour any bamboo cut when the sap is rising, even once the wood is cured. The team then went in search of vintage bamboo furniture and bought it in container loads, mostly from Los Angeles and Miami, and often through 1stdibs. The coffee tables and side cabinets in the great room were designed by Veere Grenney Associates and made by Lincoln Cato, and Soane made replicas of one of the original shell sconces for the walls. Rush matting was laid on the sustainable sapele wood floors and Veere asked Raoul Textiles to recolour its huge palm-leaf design 'Exoticus' in bamboo shades for the sofa covers.

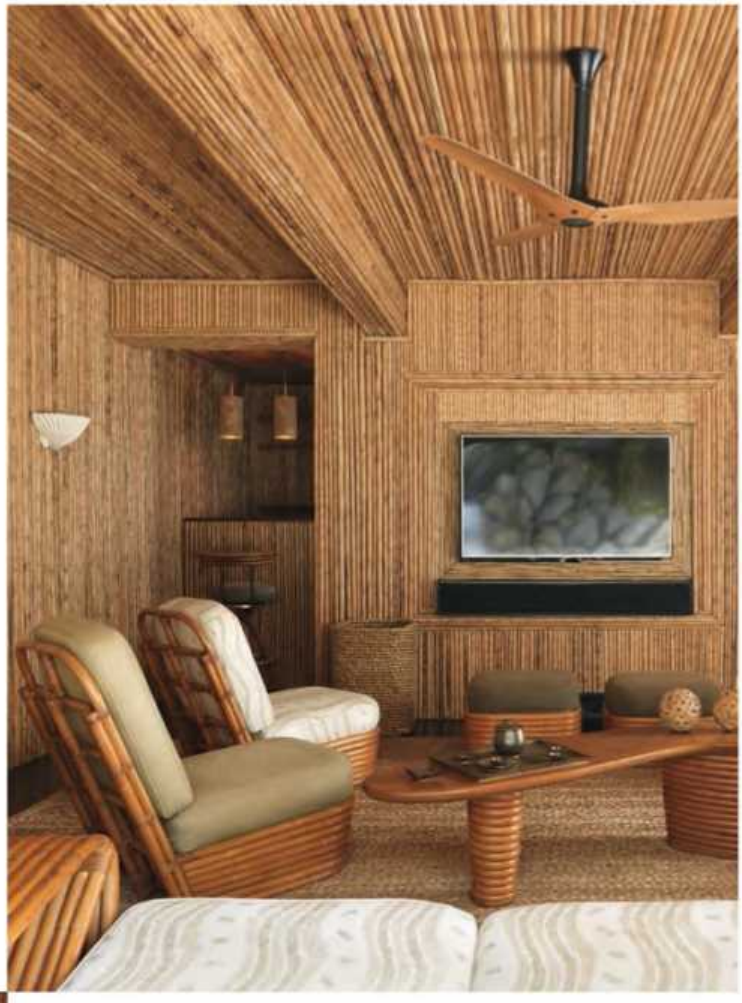
The main bedroom suite in a side pavilion continues the bamboo theme. Nothing is allowed to jar with the warm, woody atmosphere – even the bathrooms have vintage copper bathtubs with black and weathered-bronze taps. 'We didn't want that white porcelain glare,' says Veere. The blue of the sky and sea and the vivid green of the lush vegetation are the only colours allowed. Plants surround a new space down at sea level, too, where there is an outdoor covered dining area with a small kitchen and shower, and a perfect spot for sunbathing. From here, you can dive or flop straight into the blue water of Gelliceaux Bay beach.

It is a favourite spot for the owner. Although he is the proprietor of the Savile Row tailor Huntsman, he prefers to entertain here in bare feet and shorts. 'You can have 30 people for lunch on the water and they can go straight from the dining table to the sea – it's like your own private gigantic salt-water swimming pool,' he says. Houses with direct access to an empty white-sand beach are rare, even in Mustique. He loves the spare aesthetic of the bamboo, too. 'It is not overwhelming, just a very simple and pure design, not trying to impress, nestled in the leaves, just hanging on the cliff. It's just unique,' he says. The unassuming aspect of Mustique is what first attracted him to the island. 'There are no big shops, no jet skis, no sun loungers on the beach. It's in many ways the most simple place with the most sophisticated people' □

Veere Grenney Associates: 020-7351 7170; veeregrenney.com | ABA: 020-7928 1288

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The outdoor dining area has a picnic-style table and benches made from cast concrete. Below the sitting and dining room is the TV room, in which the walls and ceiling are clad in the same cured bamboo from Saint Vincent. A vintage copper free-standing tub from The Water Monopoly sits in a bathroom. The main bedroom, in a pavilion, has a bed from Soane













celebrating a GOLDEN AGE

As specialists in reviving vintage pieces, gilder Clare Mosley and her husband Mark Bicknell had the ideal skills to restore a ravaged Georgian house in south London

TEXT **LIZ ELLIOT** | PHOTOGRAPHS **PAUL MASSEY**

The sitting room, on the raised ground floor, extends from the front of the house to the back. The cream armchair is from Howe on Pimlico Road and the blue footstool is from Sean Cooper Sofas; the gilded lamp on the occasional table and the walnut-framed mirror that hangs over the chimneypiece are examples of Clare's work

The gilder Clare Mosley and her husband Mark Bicknell, who works in publishing, spent years living in Paris before they bought their eighteenth-century house in south London in 1993. It was a mortgage repossession at the tail end of the recession and the previous owner had simply put the keys through the letterbox and walked away.

'It had last been "modernised" in the Seventies,' says Clare. All five chimneypieces had been removed and the fireplaces boarded up, the lower ground floor had been made into a separate flat and the staircase torn out so that there was no access to the rest of the house. 'It was altogether pretty seedy and, although the foundations and roof were fine, all the plumbing and electricity had to be redone.' During the eight months it took to make the house reasonably habitable, they camped in one room and the builders worked around them. However, even this safeguard did not protect them from a few of the traditional building disasters. Having gone away for two days, Clare and









Chimneypieces of the same period as the house were truffle-hunted from the backyards of various dealers

Mark returned to find that the disassembled bed – a French half-tester – that they had stored in what was to be a bedroom had been cut up and thrown out of the window and into a waiting skip below.

The staircase down to the lower ground floor was reinstated – thankfully, the other original staircases were intact – and panelling was introduced into what is now a jewel-like lower-ground-floor dining room. All the original sash windows were found to have the original sliding sash shutters that had been sealed up and they are now once again in working order throughout the house. Chimneypieces were truffle-hunted from the backyards of various dealers in north London, since they were very particular that these should be of the same period as the house. 'The one in the dining room is a little older,' says Mark, 'but the other four and their register grates are as much in keeping as we could manage.'

The couple have two children who are both now at university, and this feels very much a family home, coloured by Clare and Mark's shared love of fabric and period design. On the raised ground floor, a hall leads from the front door to a casual sitting room that extends from the front of the house to the back. The bookcases, based on an original Georgian design, were made by cabinet maker Nigel Hall, who also installed the bespoke lower-ground-floor kitchen. Here, as in the rest of the house, there are examples of Clare's beautiful work: the walnut-framed mantle mirror, a number of verre églomisé lamps of differing designs, and gilded curtain poles and clocks.



OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The panelling in the dining room has been painted in a grey shade from Papers and Paints (also top right). A dining area adjoins the kitchen, with a bench for extra seating covered in a fabric from Lewis & Wood and wall lights from Original BTC. The oak units are by Nigel Hall. THIS PAGE The first-floor drawing room is furnished with a sofa in 'Zanzibar' from Bennison (top) and antique French armchairs in blue and purple velvet from Lewis & Wood (bottom)

Clare's artistry and skill is complemented by Mark's ability to see the potential in vintage finds that have been discarded by others

This last example is a good illustration of how Clare and Mark collaborate – her artistry and skill is complemented by his ability to see the potential in vintage finds that have been discarded by others. Mark found an eighteenth-century clock in need of restoration at a market; then he and Clare tracked down bronze workers, an enamel-dial maker and glassmakers to help restore it. They decided to reproduce the clocks themselves, so Mark went to Switzerland and located a movement maker. Over the next eight or so years, they made and sold over 100 clocks, made from materials such as spun copper and coloured enamel.

A narrow staircase runs along the back of the house, giving the sitting room a gracious width, which is repeated in the drawing room one floor up. On the second floor is Clare and Mark's bedroom and the main bathroom, featuring a whole wall of *églomisé* mirrored glass, which she produces or restores for designers and private clients. At the top of the house are another three bedrooms.

Clare, who trained at the renowned frame makers Arnold Wiggins & Sons in St James's, now has a studio at the end of the garden. Many of her pieces had their origin in objects gathered on trips to Parisian flea markets and auctions. And, together, Clare and Mark have created a house that is an amalgamation of two creative tastes, which happily coincide. The result is an interior rich in history and comfort □

Clare Mosley Gilding: 020-7708 3123; claremosley.com





THIS PAGE FROM TOP The bathroom has a wall of *verre églomisé* from Clare's studio, and is furnished with an antique dressing table and small sofa bought at a flea market and covered in a fabric from Claremont. In the main bedroom, a clock by Clare hangs on a trumeau mirror above a Thirties chest of drawers. OPPOSITE The couple bought this half-tester bed in Paris



The KNOWLEDGE





TIME FOR CHANGE Pages 70–77

1 LIGHT
A 'Vine' illuminated sculpture by Jeff Zimmerman hangs in the sitting room of this west London house. Made of brass and 16 mouth-blown opaque globes, each sculpture is unique. R & Company in New York sells Jeff Zimmerman lighting. The piece shown here measures 127 x 137.2cm and costs $125,000. *r-and-company.com*

2 CABINET
Piet Hein Eek's 'Waste Cabinet in Scrapwood' is an interesting take on a traditional sideboard in the dining room. Piet makes a range of recycled wood pieces, including the 'Classic Cupboard in Scrapwood', pictured here. Available from SCP, it is made to order and measures 215 x 100 x 48cm. Prices start at £3,750. *020-7739 1869; scp.co.uk*

3 SOFA
In the sitting room, Rabih Hage has covered an 'Adriano' sofa by Promemoria in a grey velvet, but it is available in a range of colours and fabrics and can also be custom covered in a fabric of your own. It is shown here in canapa, a neutral cotton/linen, measures 100 x 314 x 77cm and costs £14,520. *020-7730 2514; promemoria.com*

PERSONAL PROJECT Pages 78–83

1 BOTANICAL PRINTS
The fern engravings in the sitting room of Ben Pentreath's Bloomsbury flat are by the nineteenth-century illustrator Henry Bradbury, and were a lucky find at Portobello Road market. Oka's set of eight 'Framed Fern Prints' creates a similar effect. Each frame measures 59 x 47cm and the set costs £265. *0844-815 7380; okadirect.com*

2 CUSHION
Svenkst Tenn's 'Celotocaulis' cushion sits on the pale grey sofa in Ben's sitting room. Made of linen, the pattern was designed by Josef Frank in the Twenties. The cushion comes in two sizes and can be ordered online from Svenskt Tenn; the 40cm square version pictured costs about £82. *svenskttenn.se*

3 LAMPSHADE
Melodi Horne's silk and cotton gathered ikat lampshades are dotted around the flat. Made in England, the lampshades are lined with Irish linen and come in two sizes and an array of colours. Shown here is the 'Green Turquoise Flower' shade, which measures 30.5 x 45cm diameter and costs £395. *020-7430 2526; pentreath-hall.com*

Inspired by the houses in this issue, ELIZABETH METCALFE gives directions on how to achieve similar style





POLE POSITIONING Pages 84–87

1 RUSH MAT
In the great room and the TV room of this Mustique house, the floors are covered with rush mats from Chairworks. Made of interwoven rushes, the thick mats come in three different sizes. Shown here is the small 'Rush Runner', which measures 190 x 70cm and costs £59.95. *020-8247 3700; chairworks.info*

2 BATH
A copper bath creates a pleasing contrast with the bamboo-clad bathroom. Interior designer Veere Grenney sourced it from The Water Monopoly, which stocks an extensive range of vintage copper baths. Howe has a similar one with a roll top; it measures 73 x 157 x 65cm and costs £10,000. *020-7624 2636; thewatermonopoly.com | 020-7730 7987; howelondon.com*

3 CHAIR
Rattan chairs in the style of the twentieth-century furniture designer Paul Frankl sit in the great room. Frankl's chairs were made in the Thirties and Forties, and he took his inspiration from Asian shapes and materials. Shown here is another Frankl-inspired bamboo chair, which is available from Talisman. It measures 81.5 x 84 x 89cm and costs £1,450. *020-7731 4686; talismanlondon.com*

CELEBRATING A GOLDEN AGE Pages 88–93

1 FABRIC
The fabric used for the canopy, bedspread and cushions in the main bedroom of this south London house is 'Mikado L2804', from Le Manach. The French company has recently been bought by Pierre Frey. The fabric is based on a 1790 design, and is shown here in red. Also available in blue and yellow, it costs £252 a metre. *020-7376 5599; pierrefrey.com*

2 WALLPAPER
Clare Mosley has chosen to cover her bathroom in Lewis & Wood's 'Fly Fishing' wallpaper. Showing quintessentially rural scenes, the motif is based on works by the painter George Morland. It is 52cm wide and costs £77.40 for a 10-metre roll. *020-7751 4554; lewisandwood.co.uk*

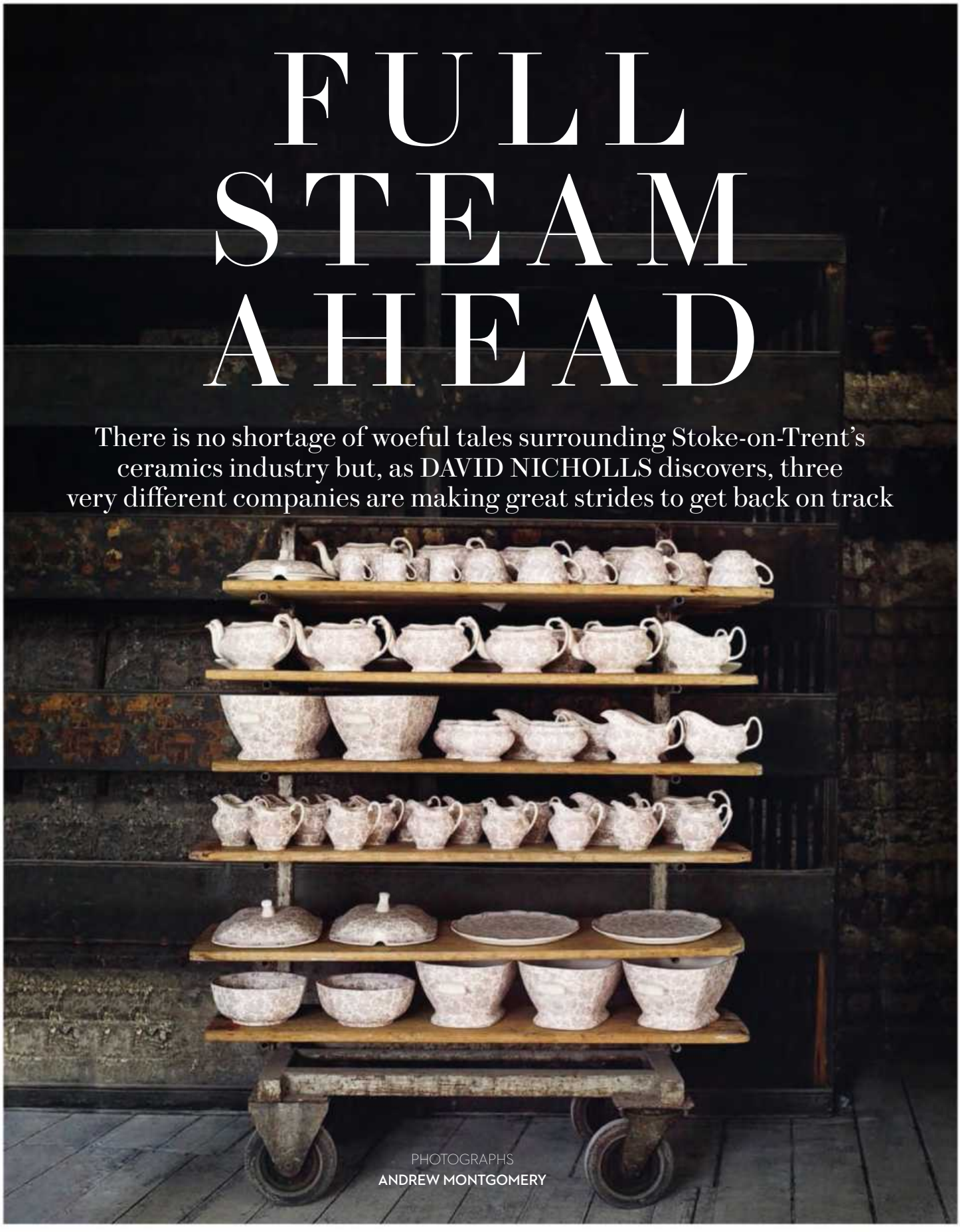
3 CLUB FENDER
In the sitting room, a traditional club fender with an upholstered seat and a brass base fits snugly around the chimneypiece. Acres Farm has a large range of club fenders, with prices starting at £1,128. For another good option, try Jamb's 'Club Fender', pictured here. It measures 55.5 x 175 x 54cm and costs £5,400. *0118-974 4305; acresfarm.co.uk | 020-7730 2122; jamb.co.uk* □

PIXELATE; DAVID BROOK



FULL STEAM AHEAD

There is no shortage of woeful tales surrounding Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics industry but, as DAVID NICHOLLS discovers, three very different companies are making great strides to get back on track



PHOTOGRAPHS
ANDREW MONTGOMERY

BURLEIGH OPPOSITE Christine Sproston, a tissue printer for the pottery company Burleigh, prints the 'Regal Peacock' pattern onto fine tissue from a hand-engraved copper roller. Patterns on the tissue will be applied to ceramic forms before being fired in the kiln. THIS PAGE Freshly printed ware on a 'dottie' or trolley













BURLEIGH CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT In the foreground, a tankard jug is being released from its Plaster of Paris mould. Creative director Steven Moore. Tankard jugs in 'Regal Peacock' and 'Arden' designs. Middleport Pottery's last bottle kiln. Rubbing liquid soap onto the tissue transfer to ensure the pattern adheres to the pot. Caster Andy Kuprianowicz carries teapots to the fettling department

For as long as I can remember, there has been a real *Little Engine That Could* sense of hope in Stoke-on-Trent. 'I think I can, I think I can,' the Potteries have desperately chugged. The uphill struggle has been one for the survival of the ceramics industry, which has been in decline since the Seventies. Still, factories continued to close: Mintons in 1991, Royal Doulton in 2004, Aynsley in 2014. Companies were sold off or merged. Between 1998 and 2008, an estimated 20,000 jobs were lost. Of course, there were success stories, too: Emma Bridgewater, who founded her tableware company in the area in 1985 – one of the Potteries' darkest periods – is regularly held up as an example of how a well-managed business can still thrive in Britain's ceramic heartland. Yet I have often feared that proclamations of a 'Potteries revival' – including my own – have been largely based on the hopes of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Have the Potteries finally run out of steam?

You would be given short shrift if you suggested this to the people of Burleigh, founded in 1851 and known the world over for its patterned tableware. There is an air of enthusiasm and confidence here, although that wasn't the case as recently as 2011. Burleigh, owned by Derbyshire-based Denby Holdings since 2010, looked as though it would have to move out of Middleport Pottery, the crumbling, unmodernised Victorian factory that had been its home for over a century. English Heritage identified it as a building at risk.

It was at this point that the Prince's Regeneration Trust, the Prince of Wales's conservation and preservation charity, stepped in with an audacious plan. It proposed to buy the Middleport Pottery site from Denby and restore it without interrupting production. It would then lease back 50 per cent of the facility to Denby for the continued making of Burleigh ware. Three years and £9 million after the deal was struck, the project was completed and is nothing short of brilliant.

What is most satisfying about the restoration is the degree of sensitivity shown. It hasn't been overdone; Middleport hasn't

The future is uncertain, and out of the hands of the people working to keep the industry alive

been Disney-fied. 'What we felt especially strongly about was that it should not feel like a "working museum",' says Ros Kerslake, chief executive of the Prince's Regeneration Trust.

Jemma Baskeyfield, who is Burleigh's historian and retail manager, grew up two streets away and recalls how secretive the area used to be. 'Because it was so competitive between the potteries, you wouldn't speak to someone from a different pottery at a trade fair – you'd be afraid you'd lose your job. No one knew what went on within these walls because there were no tours. Stoke-on-Trent was late in embracing industrial tourism.'

Burleigh has opened a two-floor shop, which sells its entire range. The Trust has opened a café overlooking the Trent and Mersey Canal, selling cappuccinos and delicious oatcakes – a local speciality. The spaces not occupied by Burleigh have been developed and are rented out as workshops, a gallery and a visitor centre.

Now, free factory tours snake around the site and visitor numbers have doubled an initial goal of 10,000 per year. The relatively unmechanised making process can be seen up close: each of the 2,000 or so pieces made here each day goes through 25 pairs of hands before it is finished.

Staff numbers in the factory have grown from 50 to 100 and one of the conditions of the Trust's lease-back agreement was that Burleigh must continue to operate using traditional skills. The Victorian underglaze tissue ceramic transfer technique of decoration, of which Burleigh claims to be the last practitioner in the world, is a completely handmade process.

Adding a flourish of gentle modernity is Burleigh's new creative director. Steven Moore, a ceramics expert, whom many will recognise from his TV appearances on *Antiques Roadshow*, has been brought on board to increase the company's relevance for the twenty-first-century home. 'I don't want to make antiques,' he says. 'I want us to make things that people will use and get rid of the things that they don't. Who uses a spoon tray? No one. You use a saucer. Spoon trays are made-up Seventies things to have when you're making spag bol.' He has been happily rolling up his sleeves and digging through Burleigh's immense archive of over 20,000 moulds, and reinstating pieces that catch his eye. Moustache mugs have been brought back into production, reflecting the renewed popularity of facial hair. Will hipsters start buying Burleigh?

If Middleport Pottery's restoration presents a certain sepia-toned, misty-eyed image of traditional craft values, then developments just a few miles away can be seen as its vampish counterpart, all glossy and simpering. The headquarters of the 257-year-old pottery Wedgwood has just undergone a £34 million makeover and it is a sight to behold. Set on the 240-acre Wedgwood Estate, a collection of buildings stands proudly in the Staffordshire countryside. The forecourt lawn is dotted with giant willow sculptures in the shapes of teacups, urns and pots – the work of the artist Tom Hare.

Welcome to the World of Wedgwood, where it is hoped that 175,000 visitors a year will come to spend the day – and their money. There is certainly enough scope to do both. Factory tours – a first for Wedgwood – are conducted on platforms raised high above the ground, overlooking the brand new facilities. Sixty per cent of Wedgwood's ceramic production (all of its bone china and jasperware) takes place here, a message that Wedgwood is keen to communicate. 'This company is totally dedicated to UK manufacturing,' says the company's chief financial officer Anthony Jones. As part of the redevelopment, Wedgwood has also committed to maintaining the existing 500 jobs and to creating 100 new ones within three years.

As well as the tour, there is a craft studio where visitors can throw their own pot, which will be sent to them once it is fired. There is a hands-on decorating studio, where blank plates are digitally printed to your own design. A glamorous tea room, which has been described as providing 'a London experience in Stoke-on-Trent',







WEDGWOOD FROM TOP The atrium entrance to the World of Wedgwood, which has a new tea room (centre). 'Anthemion Ruby' bowls in production in the Barlaston factory







WEDGWOOD FROM TOP A display of trial glazes in the Wedgwood Museum. Its director Gaye Blake Roberts. The new production facilities at Wedgwood

is staffed by 'tea sommeliers' to guide you through Wedgwood's 50-strong tea range. In an adjacent building is a more casual restaurant, the design of which was inspired by the original Wedgwood workers' canteen.

As with Burleigh, Wedgwood's recent past has been troubled. In 2009, its owner, Waterford Wedgwood, filed for bankruptcy protection and a US private equity firm bought the brands (which included Waterford, Wedgwood and Royal Doulton). Wedgwood was sold again in May 2015, this time to the Finnish homewares group Fiskars. Meanwhile, the earlier bankruptcy meant the Wedgwood Collection, its archive, was nearly sold off in order to pay the pottery company's pension bill. A £15.75 million Art Fund campaign was successful in saving the collection, which is now owned by the V&A, and on long-term loan to the new Wedgwood Museum – truly worth seeing.

Gaye Blake Roberts is the museum's director and has worked for Wedgwood for 36 years. 'The day I stop learning something new about Wedgwood every day is the day I leave,' she says. There are 80,000 pieces in the Wedgwood Collection, over 3,000 of which are on display. And it's not just pots, although there are plenty of those, of course. Wedgwood has an impressive fine-art collection, including paintings and portraits by George Stubbs, John Flaxman and Eduardo Paolozzi. The drawers of a handsome cabinet open to reveal tiny, historic enamel, glaze and white jasper trials. On a wall at the entrance is a large and mesmerising spinning wheel, annotated with the Wedgwood family tree, going back nearly four centuries to its founder Josiah.

Alongside Burleigh and Wedgwood are other well-known potteries of which the news is more boom than gloom. It has been reported that Portmeirion is investing £1.5 million in its factory and has launched an apprenticeship scheme. Churchill China has seen profits rise and is embarking on a £1.4 million expansion plan. Steelite, the area's biggest ceramics company, which services the catering industry, has plans for a new factory and the creation of over 100 jobs.

REIKO KANEKO OPPOSITE
Reiko in the studio with some of her glazed bone china vessels

What is even more heartening is the emergence of a new wave of designers who use the skills in Stoke-on-Trent to create products that speak more of the Vitsoe shelf than the Welsh dresser. One of these is Reiko Kaneko, the British-Japanese designer who opened her own studio in the area a few years after graduating from Central Saint Martins. Her inventive, delicate and often witty bone-china creations are stocked at SCP in London and design shops around the world.

Reiko designs the shapes, has the moulds made locally and decorates the finished forms, but does not manufacture the ceramic bodies herself. These are produced by a small pottery called Topaz, which was set up by Tony and Heather Douthwaite in 1994. They have hundreds of clients for whom they produce undecorated whiteware, but, according to Tony, 'Reiko is becoming one of the big players for Topaz'. Some of the other dynamic young brands Topaz processes for are H for Hannah, by the LA-based British designer Hannah Marrow, and 1882, set up by two scions of the Johnson Brothers ceramics dynasty, Emily Johnson and Christopher, her father. Tony has worked in the Potteries since 1979 and puts great value in this new injection of business: 'Clients like Reiko and Emily make a hell of a lot of difference. They've allowed us to progress, to move to bigger premises and establish ourselves.'

At the time of writing, there is more hand-wringing in the press about how the slowdown of the Chinese economy might have an impact on British manufacturing. Stoke-on-Trent is so reliant on Chinese (as well as Japanese and Korean) sales and visitors, that Visit Britain, the British tourism authority, recently gave the area a more descriptive Chinese name: Wan Bo Tao Ci, meaning 'diverse ceramics'.

The future is uncertain, and to a degree out of the hands of the people working to keep the industry alive. Can the Potteries maintain its traction on the steep road to recovery? I think it can. I think it can □

Burleigh: 01773-740740; burleigh.co.uk
Wedgwood: 01782-282651; wedgwood.co.uk
worldofwedgwood.com | wedgwoodmuseum.org.uk | Reiko Kaneko: reikokaneko.co.uk



TRIBAL GATHERING

Gabby Deeming and Ruth Sleightholme use ethnic prints and African artefacts to create schemes that stand out against the stripped-back beauty of a converted barn

PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDERS SCHØNNEMANN**



WALLS Curtains, 'Bora Bora Print Embellished' (lava black), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, linen mix with wooden beads, £375 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon. **FURNITURE** Twentieth-century Ghanaian wooden **stool** (left of sofa), 'Leopand', £950, from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. **Sofa**, 'Edward', by Niels Bendtsen, 70 x 265 x 175cm, £4,164, from Viaduct; sofa and back cushions covered in **'Milford'** (ivory), linen, £105 a metre, from Colefax and Fowler; and brown back cushion in **'Sack Cloth'** (ginger), jute/linen, £115.20 a metre, from de Le Cuona. Aluminium and wicker **cabinet**, 'Meet The Wicker', by Chudy & Grase, 125 x 65 x 35cm, £1,800, from Mint. Twentieth-century wooden **stools**, from left: Tanzanian ceremonial stool, £470; Kenyan elders' stool, £450; Congolese chief's stool, £750; Zambian village stool, £320; and Ethiopian cooking stool, £380; all from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. Seventies rattan **armchair**, 86 x 76 x 89cm, £3,600 for two, from Talisman. **ACCESSORIES** Steel and walnut



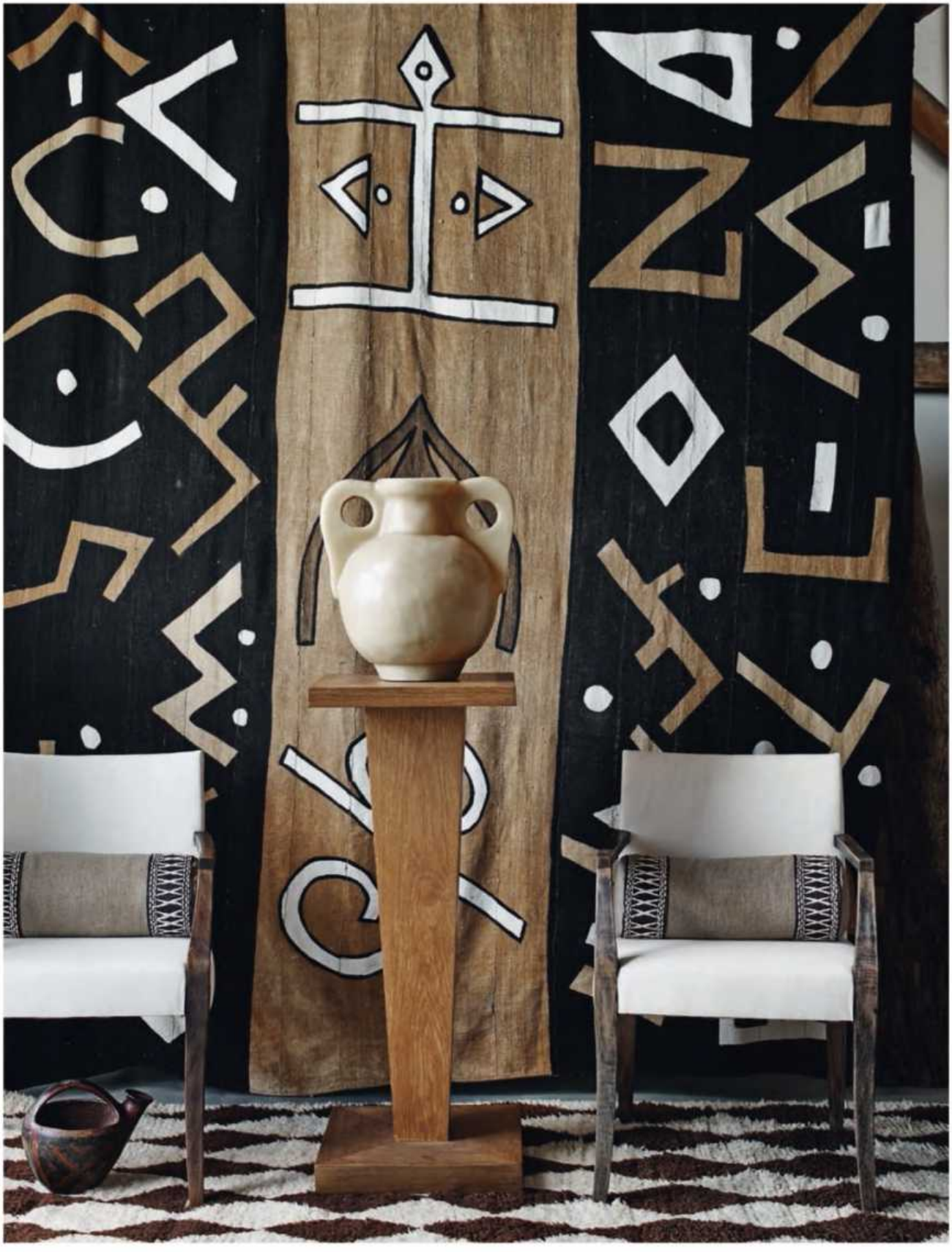
Bluetooth **speaker** (on stool), 'Gramophone', by Gramovox, £395, from The Conran Shop. Twentieth-century **vessels** (on walls): Congolese wicker storage vessel, £450; Ugandan wooden milk pots, £380 each; gourd-palm wine container, £280; all from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. Patterned square **cushions**, 'Watom' (caramel), linen/viscose, £182.40 a metre, from Pierre Frey. Rectangular **cushions**, 'Hackan' (coal), by Lee Jofa, cotton/linen, £125 a metre, from G P & J Baker. Merino wool **throw** (on sofa), 'Tweed Emphasize', by Mourne Textiles, £285, from The New Craftsmen. British stoneware **cup and saucer**, £67, from Willer. Steel and cast-iron **floor lamp**, by Workstead, 101 x 116 x 15cm base diameter, £725, from Another Country. Raffia Kuba **cloths** (on cabinet), from £99 each, from The Conran Shop. **Throw** (on chair), 'Phinda Ré' (dix-huit), wool mix, from €465 a metre, from Toyine Sellers; trimmed with **'Palm Frond'** (sea oyster), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, linen, 7cm wide, £88.20 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon



THIS PAGE **WALLS** Seventies sisal **tapestry**, by Bodil Bødtker-Næss, 216 x 100cm, £6,800, from Rose Uniacke. **FLOORS** Plaited natural-fibre **rugs**, clockwise from top: 'Rati', 'Kesav' and 'Okra', by Gaïa, £295 a square metre, from Flock. **FURNITURE** **Chaise longue**, 'Ledbury', 99 x 158 x 79cm, £2,020, from David Seyfried; with base trimmed in **'Tonga Tape'** (marine), linen/raffia with wooden beads, 13cm wide, £142.60 a metre; and **'Hula'** (palm), linen, 20cm wide, £159.40 a metre; both by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, from Turnell & Gigon; back cushion trimmed with **'Palm Frond'** (marine), linen, 7cm wide, £88.20 a metre; and **'Tikki Tape'** (marine), linen/raffia, 8cm wide, £79.80 a metre; both by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, from Turnell & Gigon. Nineteenth-century Ethiopian wooden **ceremonial chair,** £1,500, from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. **ACCESSORIES** Cotton **sarongs** (on chaise), 'Zigzag' (mustard), £79, and 'Wide Stripe' (indigo), £76, both by Stitchwallah, from Darkroom. Sisal **baskets**, 'Clean Slate', small (on wall), £16, and large, £49, from The Basket Room. Brushed oak **lamp** with paper shade, 'Claire', £2,400;



eighteenth-century Thai **stoneware pot** (on wall), £2,502; both from Christian Liaigre. Early-twentieth-century cotton and glass-beaded Nigerian Yoruba **crowns** on stands, from £750 each, from Joss Graham. **ABOVE WALLS** Paper-backed grasscloth **wallcovering**, 'Mrs Howell Natural' (palm), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, 108cm wide, £524.40 for a 4-metre roll, from Turnell & Gigon. **FURNITURE** Ash and coppiced-chestnut **cabinet**, 'Scorched Shake', by Sebastian Cox and Benchmark, 180 x 82 x 40cm, £4,600, from The New Craftsmen. Oyster bed black limestone and oak **'Refectory Table'**, 72 x 240 x 100cm, £4,195, from Lapicida. Beech-framed and cashmere upholstered horsehair **'Salon Chair'**, 94.5 x 51 x 59cm, £2,160, from Howe. **ACCESSORIES Stoneware horses**, by Claire Ireland, £183 each, from Contemporary Ceramics Centre. Earthenware **tableware**, by Barbotine, from £14 for a side plate, from Hexagone. Stoneware **rice bowls**, £92 each, from Willer. Stoneware **fish platter**, £275; stoneware **teacups**, from £43 each; all from Willer. Raffia Kuba cloth **table runner**, £365, from The Conran Shop



THIS PAGE **WALLS** Twentieth-century African mudcloth **wall hanging**, 260 x 220cm, £1,450, from Quindry. **FLOOR** Wool **rug**, 'Beni Ourain', 370 x 96cm, £1,800, from François Gilles. **FURNITURE** Thirties English oak **armchairs**, 82 x 54cm square, £1,600 a pair; Forties French oak **pedestal**, 98 x 40cm square, £1,650; both from Quindry. **ACCESSORIES** Twentieth-century Algerian clay **vessel** (on floor), £550, from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. Sixties urn-shape wax **lamp**, £1,480, from Quindry. Bolster cushions in, **'Sack Cloth'** (ginger), jute/linen, £115.20 a metre, from de Le Cuona; trimmed with **'Tikki Tape'** (lava black), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, linen/raffia, 8cm wide, £79.80 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon. **OPPOSITE** **WALLS Fabric**, from left: 'Nairobi' (sable), linen mix, 140cm wide, £148.80 a metre, from Pierre Frey; 'Moorea' (lava black), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, jute mix, 137cm wide, £265.20 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon. **FLOOR** Handwoven wool **rug**, by Rachel Scott, 75 x 145cm, £385, from O'Dell's. **FURNITURE** Nineteenth-century Swedish pine **bench**, 45 x 145 x 30cm, £550, from Puckhaber. Bedside table covered in **'Felix'** (natural),



linen, £100 a metre, from George Spencer Designs; trimmed with **'Hula'** (lava black), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, linen, 20cm wide, £159.40 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon. Oak and rush **bed**, 'Camargue' (blackened oak), 226 x 169 x 221cm, £9,450, from Ralph Lauren Home. Lacquered cotton-rope **'Moiste Chair'**, by Christian Astuguevieille, 110 x 40 x 45cm, £4,250, from Holly Hunt. **ACCESSORIES** Twentieth-century Ethiopian wooden **pot**, £350, from Bryan Reeves Tribal Gathering London. Iron and aluminium **lamps**, 'Cloche' (black), by Wrong for Hay, £189 each, from Do South Shop. Porcelain **vase**, 'Shell', by John Newdigate, £85, from The Conran Shop. Linen **bedlinen**, 'Washed' (chalk), from £48 for 2 pillowcases, from Larusi. **Bedcover**, 'Garba' (01), silk, £55 a metre, from Malabar; trimmed with **'Palm Frond'** (lava black), by Mary McDonald for Schumacher, linen, 7cm wide, £88.20 a metre, from Turnell & Gigon. Raffia cloth **cushions** (top and at foot of bed), 'Kuba', £129 each, from The Conran Shop. Linen **cushions** with raffia trim, 'Raphia', £660 each, from Holland & Sherry. *For suppliers' details, see Stockists page* □





STOWE

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was appointed head gardener of Stowe in 1741, remaining in the position for a decade. His 1744 wedding was held on the estate. Pictured here is the entrance, with the Oxford Bridge, built after Brown's tenure, and the Boycott Pavilions beyond, which date from the early eighteenth century

Planned PERFECTION

To mark 300 years since the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, many of the gardens that still reflect his distinctive approach to landscape design will open their gates for a series of talks, walks and events

TEXT **TIM RICHARDSON** | PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**









In 2016, the gardening world will mark the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, whose nickname derived from his habit of remarking upon the 'capabilities' or potential of a landscape. To commemorate the anniversary, dozens of the gardens associated with Brown are opening to the public (if they are in private hands) or else hosting special events, including walks and talks. He is, after all, the most celebrated landscape designer Britain has ever produced, with only André Le Nôtre of Versailles vying with him in terms of international fame.

So what is it that makes Brown so special? First, there is the sheer scale of his achievements. From when he started work as head gardener at Stowe in the 1740s, until his death in 1783, Brown advised or worked on at least 170 English estates (the exact number ebbs and flows according to documentary evidence). He exerted almost a monopoly on landscape style in the late eighteenth century, with aristocrats and landed gentry of all political stripes calling on his advice. He was once asked why he had not created any landscape gardens in Ireland; his reply was that he had not yet finished England.

The political aspect is important because, in the first half of the eighteenth century, landowners of Tory or Whig persuasion had used landscape design as a way of expressing their political ideals and intellectual interests, often in a highly individualistic manner – as at Stowe, where the Temple of British Worthies presented a pantheon of 'true Whig' heroes as a riposte to the corrupt Whig regime under Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford. What Brown offered by contrast was a benignly apolitical vision, which nevertheless incorporated elements of the formal classical vocabulary, such as temples, seats, Palladian bridges and porticoes – all shorn of the symbolic meaning with which they were previously freighted.

The 'Brown look' – rolling pasture right up to the house walls, decorous clumps or belts of trees, carefully sited lakes and false rivers (often with an attractive bridge or two) and entrance drives engineered for dramatic effect – became de rigueur in the country houses of the day. Great estates, such as Chatsworth, Bowood, Alnwick and Stowe, were subject to a Brownian

BOWOOD

At Bowood, Brown created a beautiful park after being commissioned by William, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, in 1762. Sloping lawns drift down to the lake, which Brown created by extending a pond. Pictured above left is the Cascade waterfall; Brown is thought to be responsible for some of the rock work. He originally sited the Doric Temple in Bowood's Pleasure Grounds, but it was moved to its present position (above right) in the nineteenth century





'makeover'. Blenheim is perhaps his most celebrated work today, while Croome Court in Worcestershire (Brown's first major commission) is now the subject of a very ambitious restoration by the National Trust.

In Brown's day, vast sums could often be expended on these landscape projects, especially where substantial water features were planned and, as a result, he became a very rich man indeed, also enjoying royal patronage later in his career, as master gardener at Hampton Court and High Sheriff of Huntingdonshire. Yet he never let up, covering huge distances on horseback even late in life, visiting far-flung estates and dispensing advice, charming clients and checking on the work of an army of gardeners and foremen (the average scheme took five years to complete).

Even then, he could not be everywhere at once and mistakes did happen. As he wrote by way of apology to one disgruntled client in Wiltshire, 'When I am galloping in one part of the world, my men are making blunders and neglects.'

In rather a modern way, Brown engineered his own image as carefully as his landscapes. He deliberately cultivated the appearance of a reliable yeoman who would not get above himself – plainly dressed in a brown coat in his portraits, like a country parson, and never publishing a word about his design precepts.

Despite his astonishing success, Brown has proved a controversial figure in garden history. The creation of his pastoral idylls in many cases led to the removal of the elaborate and formal parterre gardens of the seventeenth century and, as a result, he has been blamed for the virtual erasure of a key period in English landscape history. Recently, though, Brown's sensitivity to existing formal landscapes has been more appreciated – he frequently retained formal features, such as avenues of trees and straight carriage rides, just so long as the essential pastoralism of the scene he was creating was not undermined.

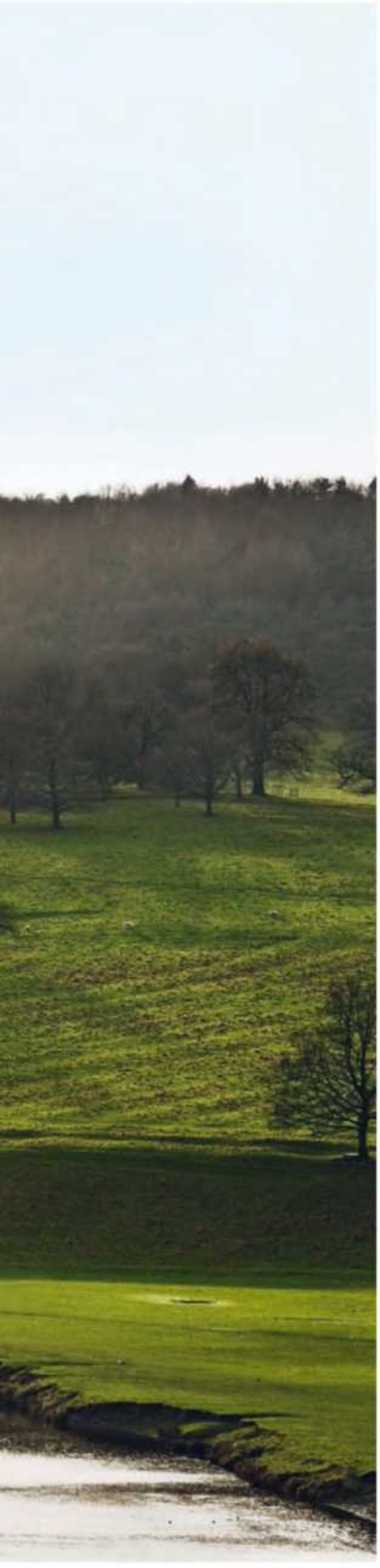
Another often under-appreciated aspect of Brown's work is the sheer practicality of his landscape design in an estate setting. Those rolling acres of pasture near the house were conceived as haymaking factories, a vital resource on estates that relied on horsepower, while the clumps and belts of trees that fringed the park were also useful coverts for game birds, at a time when innovations in gun design led to game-shooting becoming a mania among landowners. Even the artificial lakes Brown

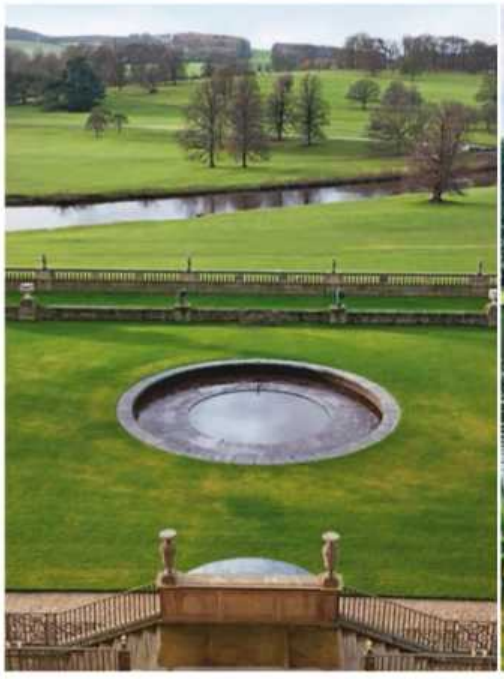
ALNWICK

The 1st Duke of Northumberland employed Brown in 1750 to landscape the parkland adjoining Alnwick Castle. He created hills along the roadside to hide the castle from view and originally planned a lake, in which the Duchess could sail her boat, *Esperance*. Following a flood in 1771, however, he instead built the Lion Bridge (right)











created doubled as stores of fish, waterfowl and otters for sport.

The great paradox of Brown's work, and the reason that it is sometimes described as 'invisible', is that the whole point was to create an illusion of natural English countryside – and many of us have fallen for it over the centuries. Brown's achievements are all too easy to take for granted because we assume that his landscapes have always been there. Yet a typical Brownian landscape is highly artificial, the result of earth-moving, extensive tree planting (and tree removal), the erasure of buildings or even whole villages, and the creation or finessing of rivers and lakes.

In a Brownian landscape, even the directions in which we look will have been manipulated by the designer, by means of the placement of trees and hills. Brown eschewed vistas that ran straight out from the front of a house, for example, preferring diagonal visual lines from park to house and vice versa, ideally involving a change of level, and he would carefully organise numerous other cross vistas throughout the estate. Groups of trees were often placed as 'staging posts' in a long vista. This technique owed something to the composition of Claude Lorrain's landscape paintings, which were highly influential at the time (and often found hanging in the drawing rooms from which these very vistas could be espied). So, despite the ostensible naturalism, the approach was rational and geometric: a plan view of a typical Brown landscape design resembles something that a contemporary computer programme might come up with.

Finally, it is worth celebrating the sheer versatility and flexibility of his design model. This was not a style that was simply 'rolled out' across England like a lorryload of turf. Each and every Brown design has its own distinctive features and bears the hand of the master, always working in tandem with the particularities of the landscape and its atmosphere – what the great eighteenth-century poet and gardener Alexander Pope called, 'the genius of the place'. Perhaps that is a fitting description, too, for Lancelot Brown □

For more information about the events and celebrations organised for Capability Brown's anniversary, visit capabilitybrown.org

CHATSWORTH

In 1760, Brown started work at Chatsworth, creating natural-looking pastoral landscape from what had previously been working farmland, and blurring the distinction between the garden and park, so that the park apparently came up to the walls of the house. Parterres were converted to pasture, but several important formal features remained, and a variety of tree species were imported from North America. The River Derwent (opposite and above left), runs through the estate, and the Emperor Fountain (above right) was added in the nineteenth century



Snow white splendour

Though beautiful year round, the gardens of Cambo House in Fife come into their own in winter, when the breathtaking array of snowdrops, contrasting with delicate seed heads and semi-evergreen foliage, attracts visitors in their droves

TEXT **CAROLINE BECK** | PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**



OPPOSITE *Galanthus sandersii* 'Lowick'. THIS PAGE *Eryngium yuccifolium* with *Elymus canadensis*

Many seasoned gardeners will quietly admit that their favourite time of year is winter. When I heard a famous gardener say this, I thought I had misunderstood. To me, winter was the death of the garden, but now, two decades on, I realise that she was telling me something invaluable. The days are short, the weather frequently vile, but the time is your own and you finally have a moment to stop and take in the unlooked-for beauty of the way that frost, snow and low winter sun act upon your garden and the few plants still performing – 'the genuine toughs,' as the garden writer Vita Sackville-West once called them. It's a season of deep reflection, and we all need that.

Cambo in Fife, near the coastal town of St Andrews, is a well cared for and loved garden at any time of the year, but in winter it really finds its voice. The abundance of snowdrops, thousands upon thousands of them sweeping through the oak and beech woodland leading to a little rugged beach, is extraordinary, and you are struck by the contrast of the delicacy of the snowdrops and their proximity to the turbulent grey sea. You find yourself unexpectedly lifted at the sight of them, even on a damp and dismal day. They are not just flowers. They signal that the earth is waking up and the light is finally returning. According to Lady Catherine Erskine, galanthophile extraordinaire and enterprising gardener, who with her husband Sir Peter owns Cambo, 'The more grey the winter, the more the visitors come to see them.'

When she and Peter first came to live at Cambo in 1976, they were captivated by the dense carpet of snowdrops – both singles and doubles – in the woods, which span 70 acres. Peter's grandmother, a talented gardener, encouraged their prolific spread by replanting them every few years and Catherine thought she could do the same. Initially, as a way of making the estate pay, Catherine sold some bulbs to the 'diggers' who come, dig them up, then sell them on. She even enlisted her four children to dig up some clumps and replant them. The following February, to her surprise, they flowered in the distinctive shape of the 'Ban the Bomb' symbol.

A visit to Hodsock Priory in Nottinghamshire in 2002, a place famed for its huge numbers of snowdrops – and visitors – inspired Catherine to venture into snowdrops tourism. That year, she distributed some flyers advertising the snowdrops and immediately doubled the number of annual visitors to Cambo. From there, she went on to sell them directly and by mail order, and to amass a collection of over 350 different varieties, such as the tall and stately *Galanthus elwesii*, the sweetly scented 'S Arnott' and the elegant green-tipped 'Viridapice'. Not all have such poetic names – 'Grumpy' is a particular favourite.

Snowdrops attract devotees and Catherine has seen them all – from the casual visitor gasping as they see them for the first time, to the dedicated collector lying on their stomach in the winter wet minutely examining each marking. In 2012, a single rare snowdrop bulb was auctioned on eBay for £725. Catherine has one of the NCCPG snowdrop collections and built her reputation on selling them 'in the green', with their leaves still intact, finding that they established more reliably than bulbs, which can be finicky. The Scottish Snowdrop Festival, from the end of January to the end of March, is one of the highlights of Scotland's gardening year, and the moonlit walks of Cambo's snowdrop woods, called Snowdrops by Starlight, reduce even the most hard-hearted to childlike wonder. When most garden shops are closed or looking forlorn, Cambo is doing a roaring trade in snowdrops, hellebores, crocus, leucojum, *Iris histrioides* and aconites, bringing light and colour to the short days.

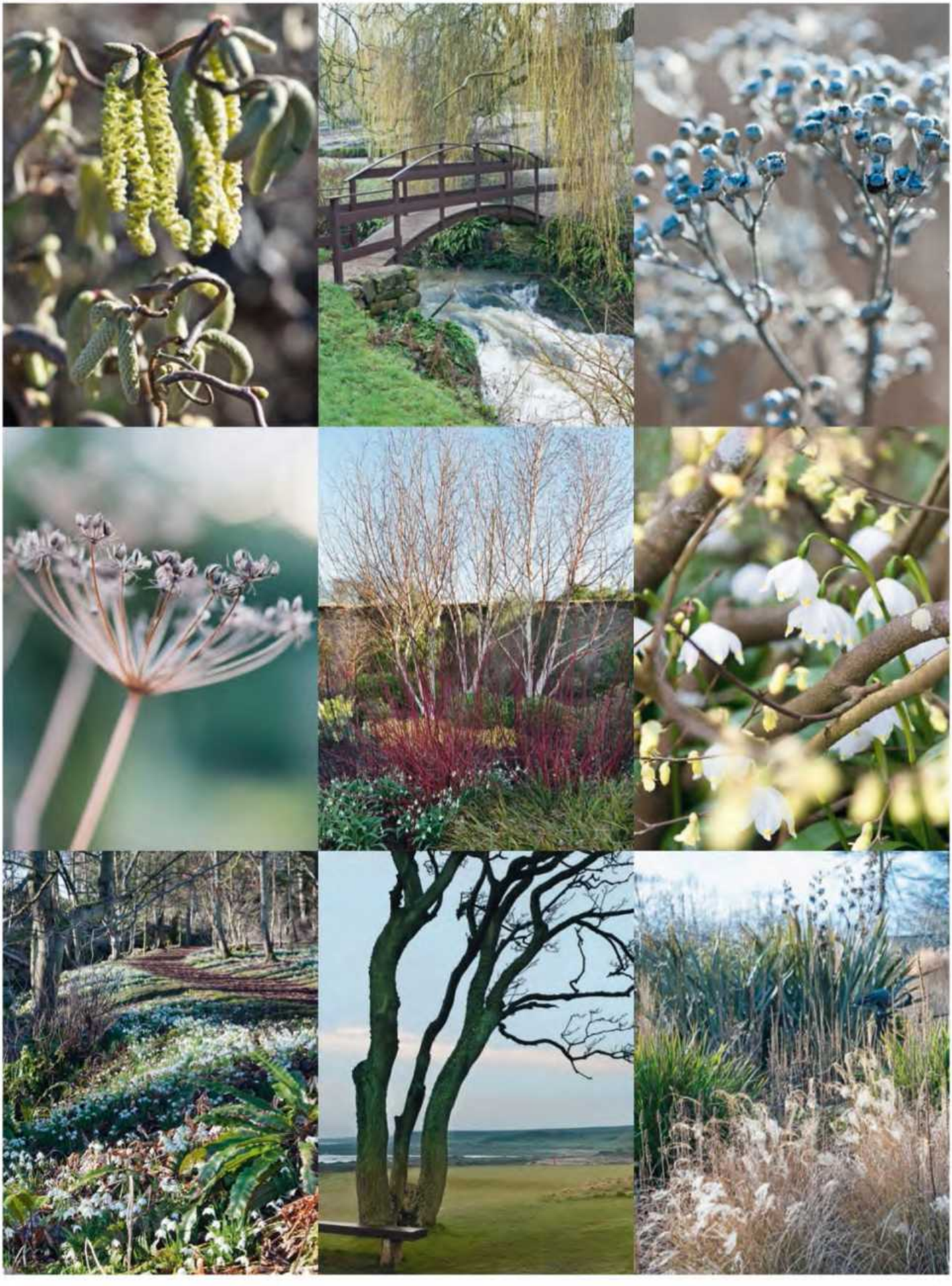
Catherine, helped by her head gardener Elliott Forsyth, is always experimenting, looking for ways to expand the range of things that visitors can enjoy. As the garden is relatively dry for Scotland, Elliott – influenced by the Dutch plantsman Piet Oudolf – designed the North American Prairie Garden, a late-summer perennial and grass flower extravaganza, which blazes in August and September and has the added bonus of keeping its skeletal structure until late winter. The low winter light illuminates the seed heads of plants like *Monarda fistulosa*, *Aster laevis* and *Eryngium yuccifolium*, their delicacy like the wings of insects, often beaded in early morning frost. Goldfinches, blue tits and siskins can often be seen swaying on the stems as they raid the protein-rich seeds. The spent foliage provides an insulating blanket for the roots, as well as a little food for the following season, and it is finally chopped back to the ground in February.

Alongside the North American Prairie Garden is the Winter Garden, and here Catherine has pushed at the boundaries of what constitutes a winter plant. 'We've got Himalayan birch with the ghostly white trunks, the coloured stems of dogwood and, of course, our rarer snowdrops, but I'm also extending these true winter plants to the foliage of early spring ones.' So the fleshy winter leaves of bergenia – or elephant's ears – in bronze, scarlet or burgundy are contrasted with flame-coloured *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Dixter', the soft leaves of the perennial honesty plant *Lunaria rediviva* or the many different types of heuchera, which have excellent, semi-evergreen foliage ranging from bright green to deep plum. As Catherine says, 'It certainly stops you getting too precious about what is a winter plant and, because of the season, you really have time to stop and look' □

The gardens of Cambo House, Kingsbarns, St Andrews, Fife are open daily from 10am until 5pm (01333-450054; camboestate.com; camboheritagetrust.org.uk)

The snowdrops are not just flowers. They signal that the earth is waking up and the light is finally returning

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'. The Japanese Bridge crosses the Cambo burn. *Parthenium integrifolium*. *Leucojum vernum*. *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Yakushima Dwarf' and *Phormium tenax* 'Atropurpureum' in the Prairie Garden. A view of the North Sea from the bottom of the Cambo burn walk. *Galanthus nivalis* f. *pleniflorus* 'Flore Pleno' lines a woodland path. An allium seed head. Himalayan birch and *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire' (centre)



WINE & FOOD

TASTE NOTES | RECIPES | SIMPLE SUPPERS



These sweet treats are made to order Tuesday to Friday and delivered the next day

TASTE NOTES

NEWS, REVIEWS AND TIPS FOR COOKS AND WINE LOVERS, BY **JOANNA SIMON**

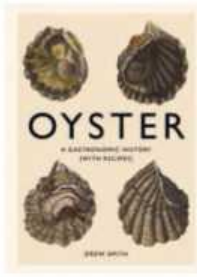
Canelés are a speciality of Bordeaux, so the best ought to be made there, but I haven't found any as good as those produced in London by Caroline Coutand-Gavriloiu under the label Yvonne & Guite (named after her grandmothers). From the caramelised crust and soft centre to the delicate vanilla and rum flavouring, they are special; £16.50 for a 250g box of 25 mini canelés, £18 for a 315g box of 9 regular size, £20 for a 310g mixed box of 16. *yvonneguite.com*

A signature ingredient at newly reopened Sartoria in Mayfair is the citrus fruit bergamot. Find it in chef Francesco Mazzei's risotto with cuttlefish, squid with polenta, wild-boar marinade, jellies and sorbets.

FLAVOURS OF CHILDHOOD

The single-origin spices in Green Saffron **spice kits** come from founder Arun Kapil's family's farm in Moradabad, India, making them fresher and more aromatic than mass-market spices, which can be years old. All kits include Arun's invaluable book, *Fresh Spice*, and a Moulinex AR1044 grinder. The beginners' kit has five whole (unground) spices (£65); the advanced kit has 12, plus three blends (£135); and the master kit has 18 spices and extras such as an Ilsa grater, basmati rice and mango chutney (£175). *greensaffron.com*







GREAT READS

Oysters are extraordinary creatures: highly nutritious and providers of pearls and shells, they change sex at will, predate humans and, in Canada, can live to 100 years old. Drew Smith's OYSTER: A GASTRONOMIC HISTORY (Abrams, £18.99), is as much an illustrated cultural history as a cookbook, though there are 50 recipes. Berry Bros & Rudd Wine School's EXPLORING & TASTING WINE: A WINE COURSE WITH DIGRESSIONS (B B & R Press, £30) cleverly works as both an introduction to the subject of wine and wine tasting and, with its essays, a book for the more knowledgeable.

WINES OF THE MONTH



Chenin Blanc should be on more wine drinkers' radars. Coming in all styles, from dry to sweet, still and sparkling, it ages well and its natural acidity makes it a good food wine. **Château de Fesles La Chapelle Anjou Chenin 2012/13** is textbook Loire Chenin – dry and racy with orchard fruitiness, £13.99, Waitrose.



Montes Alpha Cabernet Sauvignon 2012 from Chile's Colchagua Valley is the first vintage to be dry farmed, which hugely cuts water usage and gives a wine with richer but brighter fruit and smoother tannins, £12.50, Slurp.co.uk.



Handmade, organic, vegan and variously flavoured with goji, maca, spirulina and other so-called superfoods, Doisy & Dam's five dark **chocolate bars** may sound holier than thou, but they're made with quality chocolate with well-balanced flavours. If 74 per cent cocoa is more than you want, there's a new range of milk and white bars, with flavours including quinoa, smoked tea and vanilla. Bars cost £1.75 for 40g and £3.50 for 100g; a box of 5 x 40g is £9.50. *doisyanddam.com*

GO FOR GRAVADLAX

If you've enjoyed gravadlax at events such as Henley, Goodwood and Wimbledon, it may well have been supplied by **Coln Valley Smokery** in Gloucestershire. The salmon – from Scotland – is cured in traditional brick kilns, but has contemporary flavours, such as Pimm's, £7.95 for 200g; or pesto, beetroot and lemon, £14.85 for a 390g pack of all three, or £7.60 for 200g individual packs. *colnvalley.co.uk* ☐



PHOTOGRAPHS: OLA O SMIT



CRISP SUSHI CAKES WITH TUNA SASHIMI, COCONUT PRAWNS WITH SRIRACHA DIP, AND SCALLOPS AND CHORIZO WITH PEA PUREE

Modern morsels

IF YOUR CANAPE REPERTOIRE IS RATHER UNINSPIRING, WHY NOT RING THE CHANGES AND TREAT YOUR GUESTS TO SOMETHING NEW. **CAROLINE BARTY** CREATES SWEET AND SAVOURY BITES, MOST OF WHICH CAN BE PREPARED IN ADVANCE. ALL RECIPES MAKE 20–25 CANAPES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

PHOTOGRAPHS **WILLIAM LINGWOOD** | FOOD PREPARATION AND STYLING **BRIDGET SARGESON**
WINE RECOMMENDATIONS **JOANNA SIMON** | TABLE STYLING **ALEXANDER BREEZE**

COCONUT PRAWNS WITH SRIRACHA DIP

The prawns and chilli dip can be prepared well in advance, but ideally fried just before serving. You'll find sriracha in most supermarkets or online.

For the dip

- **250g mayonnaise**
- **1tbsp sriracha sauce, plus extra to serve (optional)**
- **½tbsp runny honey**
- **1tsp lime juice**

For the prawns

- **1 heaped tbsp plain flour**
- **1 large egg, beaten**
- **1tbsp milk**
- **50g desiccated coconut**
- **50g panko breadcrumbs**
- **20 jumbo raw peeled prawns**
- **2.5 litres oil for deep-frying**

1 Mix all the dip ingredients together in a bowl and chill until ready to serve.

2 For the prawns, mix the flour with a little salt and freshly ground black pepper and place in a shallow dish. Mix the beaten egg and milk in another dish and, in a third dish, combine the coconut and breadcrumbs. Dip each prawn into the flour, then the egg, and finally roll in the breadcrumbs to coat. Place in a large dish. Repeat with all the prawns.

3 Pour the oil in a large saucepan or heat a deep-fat fryer to 180˚C. Deep-fry the prawns in small batches for 2–3 minutes until cooked through. Drain on kitchen paper. Serve the prawns warm with the dipping sauce, decorated if you wish with a little extra sriracha.

CRISP SUSHI CAKES WITH TUNA SASHIMI

I have suggested wasabi paste and pickled ginger to accompany these sushi cakes, but you could add a little sliced avocado or deep-fried crispy ginger shards instead. These cakes are also delicious served plain with soy sauce for dipping.

- **275g sushi rice**
- **2tbsp mirin**
- **1tbsp rice vinegar**
- **½tsp Maldon sea salt**
- **1½tbsp black roasted sesame seeds**
- **250g sushi-grade tuna**
- **4tbsp sunflower or rapeseed oil**

To serve

- **Wasabi paste and pickled ginger**

1 Place the rice, mirin, rice vinegar and Maldon salt in a saucepan. Pour in 550ml water and bring to the boil. Turn the heat down, cover with a lid and simmer gently for 20 minutes. The rice should have absorbed the water and be tender with just a little bite. Take off the heat, stir in the black sesame seeds and leave covered for 10 minutes. Then take off the lid and leave to cool.

2 With wet hands, mould the rice into little sushi-shape cakes (about 20–25 measuring about 4 x 3 x 2cm each). Place on non-stick baking parchment and chill for 1 hour.

3 Cut the tuna into thin strips, large enough to just cover the rice. Chill until ready to serve. You can prepare up to this stage 24 hours in advance.

4 Heat about half the oil in a frying pan and fry the cakes in batches, adding more oil when needed, for 2–3 minutes each side until golden brown. Transfer to a plate. To serve, smear a little wasabi over the surface of the cakes, top with a strip of tuna and garnish with a little pickled ginger.

SCALLOPS AND CHORIZO WITH PEA PUREE

The peas and chorizo can be prepared well in advance and heated through just before serving. I serve these on canapé spoons, which you can buy online from souschef.co.uk.

- **15g butter**
- **6 spring onions, trimmed and roughly sliced**
- **200g frozen petits pois**
- **1tbsp chopped mint leaves**
- **1tbsp crème fraîche**
- **75g chorizo, outer skin removed and sliced into 3mm-thick rounds**
- **2tbsp olive oil**
- **10 fresh scallops without coral (or 20, if small)**

1 Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the spring onions and sauté for 3–4 minutes. Add the petits pois and 2tbsp water, and cook for a further 6–8 minutes. Take off the heat and stir in the mint and crème fraîche. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Purée the peas in a food processor or with a stick blender. Chill until ready to serve.

2 Dry fry the chorizo slices for 1–2 minutes each side until crispy. Drain on kitchen paper before setting aside.

3 Just before serving, heat the oven to 180˚C/fan oven 160˚C/mark 4. Warm the peas for 8–10 minutes and the chorizo for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare and cook the scallops. Cut each one in half horizontally (keep whole if you have 20 small ones). Heat the oil in the frying pan over a high heat and fry the scallops for 40–50 seconds each side. To assemble, place 1tsp pea purée on each spoon and top with a scallop.

CRISPY BEEF ON LETTUCE

(Pictured on following page)

Kecap manis is a sweet Indonesian soy sauce. Make the sauce and beef in advance and then stir them together just before serving.

- **3–4 baby gem lettuces**
- **150ml sunflower or rapeseed oil**
- **3 spring onions, trimmed and finely sliced**
- **1 small red chilli (medium heat), deseeded and finely chopped**
- **2.5cm piece root ginger, peeled and finely chopped**
- **2 garlic cloves, finely chopped**
- **1tbsp dry sherry**
- **3tbsp kecap manis or sweet soy sauce**
- **2tbsp soy sauce**
- **4tbsp cornflour**
- **2tsp Chinese five-spice powder**
- **300g beef fillet**

1 Take 20 small leaves from the hearts of the lettuces – if they are too big, they will be difficult to eat. Place on a tray and chill until ready to assemble.

2 Heat 1tbsp of oil in a wok (or large frying pan) and fry the spring onions, chilli, ginger and garlic for 1 minute, stirring. Pour in the sherry, kecap manis and soy sauce, and bubble for a further minute. Transfer to a bowl and set aside, then clean and dry the wok.

3 Mix the cornflour with the five-spice powder. Cut the beef into matchstick-size pieces, add to the bowl and coat well with the flour mixture. ▷





Above from left CRISPY BEEF ON LETTUCE, VERRINES OF GOATS' CHEESE PANNA COTTA

4 Pour the remaining oil into the wok and heat until a piece of beef dropped in sizzles immediately. Fry the beef in small batches for 1 minute, lift out with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. You can prepare up to this stage about 2 hours in advance.
5 Before serving, mix the beef with the sauce and heap little piles of the beef into the lettuce leaves.

VERRINES OF GOATS' CHEESE PANNA COTTA

You can serve these in shot glasses, or transparent canapé cups available online at souschef.co.uk. Makes enough to half-fill 20 x 60ml shot glasses.

- **4 leaves gelatine, about 8g**
- **4 x 150ml tubs fresh (soft) goats' cheese**
- **175ml natural yogurt**
- **75ml mayonnaise**
- **4 shakes of celery salt**

To serve

- **Chilli jam, tapenade or bacon jam and basil leaves**

1 Soak the gelatine leaves in cold water for 10–15 minutes. Beat together the goats' cheese, yogurt, mayonnaise and celery salt.
2 Lift the gelatine out of the water and place in a small saucepan over a low heat until melted. Leave for a minute, then slowly beat into the goats' cheese mixture. Fill a piping bag and pipe in enough mixture to half-fill the glasses, or spoon the mixture into the glasses if you prefer, though I find it easiest with a piping bag. Place on a tray and refrigerate for at least 4–5 hours until set.
3 To serve, garnish each verrine with the topping of your choice and/or decorate with a basil leaf.

CODDLED QUAIL EGGS WITH SOLDIERS

You can use small bowls, egg cups or little espresso cups (you will need 20). I sometimes sprinkle the cream with a little cep powder (available from souschef.co.uk) and, for a more savoury bite, you could spread some Gentleman's Relish on the toast.

- **2tsp truffle oil or vegetable oil**
- **20 quail eggs**
- **200ml double cream**
- **10 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only**
- **5–6 slices sourdough bread or enough to make 20 soldiers**
- **Butter, for spreading**

1 Brush the egg cups with the oil and place on a baking tray. Crack the eggs into the cups. Add 2tsp of cream into each cup, season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and sprinkle over the thyme. You can prepare the eggs at least 2 hours in advance up to this stage, although if you refrigerate them, they may need extra cooking time.
2 Heat the oven to 180˚C/fan oven 160˚C/mark 4. While the oven is heating, start toasting the bread. Cut off the crusts, spread with butter, cut into soldiers and set aside. Place the eggs in the oven and cook for 6–7 minutes – check after 6 minutes with the base of a spoon. The whites should be slightly firm. Serve with a soldier placed on each egg cup.

TARTIFLETTE SQUARES

(Pictured on following page)

You can make these in advance, cool them and cut into squares. Before serving, heat for 5 minutes, at 180˚C/fan oven 160˚C/mark 4.

- **1kg waxy potatoes, such as Charlotte**
- **2tbsp rapeseed oil**
- **1 onion, finely chopped**
- **225g cubed pancetta**
- **2 large eggs, beaten**
- **260g Reblochon cheese, thinly sliced**
- **2tbsp finely chopped chives**

1 Halve or quarter the potatoes if large and cook in a pan of lightly salted boiling water for 15–20 minutes until just cooked through. Drain and leave to cool before scraping off the skins. Cut the potatoes into smaller pieces, about 5mm square. Place in a mixing bowl.
2 Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the onion for 10 minutes. Add the pancetta and sauté for a further 10 minutes until golden. Cool slightly before mixing into the potatoes. Stir in the eggs and season with freshly ground black pepper. You shouldn't need any more salt.
3 Heat the oven to 180˚C/fan oven 160˚C/mark 4. Base-line a roasting tin, about 26 x 20cm, with non-stick baking parchment, allowing the paper to come up the short sides – this will make it easier to lift out the tartiflette once cooked. Tip the potato mixture into the tin and spread out to the edges, patting down firmly and smoothing the surface. Arrange the cheese over the potatoes, covering the surface. Bake in the oven for 30–35 minutes.
4 Take out of the oven and leave for 1 hour before cutting into squares. You should get about 25–30. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve warm with toothpicks so guests can pick up the squares. ▷



CODDLED QUAIL
EGGS WITH SOLDIERS





From left TARTIFLETTE SQUARES, ROSE AND RASPBERRY MARSHMALLOWS AND CARAMEL-DIPPED BISCOTTI

ROSE AND RASPBERRY MARSHMALLOWS

Rose water can vary in strength, so start with 1tsp and add a little more if the flavour is not strong enough. You can buy freeze-dried raspberry powder and crystallised rose petals at souschef.co.uk. You will also need a sugar thermometer. These marshmallows can be made a day ahead.

- **50g icing sugar, sifted, plus extra to serve**
- **25g cornflour, sifted, plus extra to serve**
- **8 sheets gelatine**
- **400g sugar**
- **45ml liquid glucose**
- **2 large egg whites**
- **1-2tsp rose water**
- **1½tbsp freeze-dried raspberry powder**

To decorate

- **Crystallised rose petals (optional)**

1 Base-line a 30 x 20cm tin with non-stick baking parchment. In a bowl, mix together the icing sugar and cornflour, then lightly dust the parchment with about 2tbsp. Soak the gelatine in 180ml cold water for 10-15 minutes.

2 Put the sugar, liquid glucose and 100ml water in a saucepan and place over a low heat until the sugar dissolves. Then turn up the heat and boil until the syrup reaches 121°C on a sugar thermometer. Meanwhile, using an electric whisk in a large, heatproof bowl, whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks. When the sugar syrup has reached the correct temperature, take off the heat and add the gelatine and its soaking water. Swirl the saucepan to combine. Immediately pour the syrup into the egg whites in a steady stream, continuously whisking for at least 10 minutes until the egg whites become stiff and glossy.

3 Whisk in the rose water, taste, and add more if necessary for a stronger flavour, then lightly fold in the raspberry powder and spoon the mixture into the prepared tin. Smooth the surface and leave for 3-4 hours to set firm.

4 To serve, dust the surface of the marshmallows with a little more of the icing sugar and cornflour mixture. Place a board on top and flip over. Lift off the tin and peel off the parchment. Cut into squares, about 30 depending on size, and decorate with a crystallised rose petal if you wish.

CARAMEL-DIPPED BISCOTTI

You can buy Valrhona Blond Dulcey chocolate online, but you could dip the biscotti into dark or milk chocolate if you prefer.

- **150g Valrhona Blond Dulcey chocolate, roughly chopped**
- **20 almond biscotti (cantucci) biscuits**

1 Place the chocolate in a pudding basin and fit over a saucepan filled with 2-3cm barely simmering water. Stir until melted, then take off the heat and leave the chocolate until cool.

2 Dip the base of each biscuit into the chocolate, allow any excess to drip off, then place top down on a wire rack, so the chocolate layer is facing up. Leave until the chocolate has set hard.

TO DRINK

When I spent an evening eating 29 canapés created by the Spanish chef Ferran Adrià, of El Bulli fame, they were accompanied by **Dom Pérignon 2005 Champagne**; £116, Berry Bros & Rudd (0800-280 2440) and other merchants. This would be splendid with any of the canapés here, but there are plenty of more affordable alternatives. The Co-operative's **Les Pionniers Champagnes** continue to shine above their price, both the non-vintage at £16.99 and the 2006 at £24.99. Aldi's attractive **Philizot Veuve Monsigny Champagne Brut** is an astonishing £9.97, or there is the vintage **Philizot Veuve Monsigny Blanc de Blancs 2010** at £19.99.

Among other sparkling wines, Aldi scores with its **Philippe Michel Crémant du Jura**, £7.29. Yapp Brothers' (01747-860423) **Domaine Collin Crémant de Limoux Brut Cuvée Selection**, £12.50, is a jump up in quality. For a superior Prosecco, try Majestic's **Salatin Extra Dry Treviso Prosecco**, £12.99.

Still white wines should be crisp, dry or just off-dry, and not too acid,heavy or oaky: Sainsbury's **Taste the Difference Languedoc White 2014**, £8, fits the bill, as does **Corney & Barrow's** (020-7265 2430) lighter and zestier **Blanc 2014**, a Côtes de Gascogne, £7.50. Red wines should not be tannic, heavy or oaky. Pinot Noir is a good choice, such as Marks & Spencer's **Palataia Pinot Noir 2014** from Germany, £10, or **Blind Spot Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2014** from Australia, £9.50, The Wine Society (01438-741177) □

FOOD FOR FRIENDS

LOUISA CARTER SUGGESTS STRESS-FREE DISHES IDEAL FOR ENTERTAINING – A VEGETARIAN MAIN COURSE AND A SIMPLY DELICIOUS SPONGE FOR DESSERT. **ALL RECIPES SERVE 6**

ROOT VEGETABLE AND CHESTNUT GRATIN

This hearty vegetarian main course can be prepared a day or two ahead (keep the Gruyère topping separate and sprinkle on just before cooking). All root vegetables work well – try parsnips, swede or celeriac – and mix thyme, parsley or rosemary with the sage. For extra flavour, stir in a tablespoon each of mustard, balsamic vinegar and honey when adding the tamari.

For the vegetables • 350g carrots, cut into 2cm slices • 350g butternut squash, cut into 2cm chunks • 2 large leeks, halved lengthways and rinsed of grit, cut into 2cm slices • 1tbsp vegetable stock powder or 1 stock cube • 2tbsp olive oil • 1 large onion, thinly sliced • 200g mushrooms, quartered • 200g ready-cooked, peeled chestnuts, roughly chopped • 10–15 sage leaves, finely chopped For the sauce • 50g butter • 30g plain flour • 1tbsp tamari or dark soy sauce For the topping • 100g aged Gruyère, grated • 75g walnuts, finely chopped • 10–15 sage leaves, finely chopped • 75g coarse breadcrumbs, e.g. ciabatta • 4tbsp olive oil

1 Heat the oven to 200ºC/fan oven 180ºC/mark 6 and prepare the vegetables. Bring 1.5 litres of water to the boil in a large saucepan. Stir in the stock powder, add the carrots and squash and boil for 15 minutes. Add the leeks and boil for a further 5 minutes. Drain, reserving the cooking liquor (leave to cool slightly). Tip the vegetables into a gratin dish, roughly 35 x 25cm.
2 Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Fry the onions for 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and fry for 5 minutes more until browned. Add to the gratin dish with the chestnuts and sage.
3 For the sauce, return the frying pan to a low-medium heat and melt the butter, then stir in the flour to form a smooth paste. Gradually whisk in 750ml of the reserved cooking liquor and simmer for 5 minutes, continually whisking, until thickened and smooth, adding more of the cooking liquor if needed to give the consistency of single cream. Whisk in the tamari, season with salt and black pepper, then pour over the vegetables and stir gently.
4 Mix all the topping ingredients together, apart from the oil, and scatter over the vegetables and sauce. Drizzle over the oil and bake for 40–50 minutes until golden brown and bubbling at the edges.

CHESTNUTS

Vacuum-packed peeled and cooked chestnuts, available in most supermarkets, save the laborious, if charming, task of preparing them yourself. Here are a few suggestions for using them. Toss in a pan with cubes of bacon or pancetta, then add to a winter salad, roasted root vegetables or lightly cooked Brussels sprouts. Stir into a beef and ale (or red wine) casserole, or mix with mushrooms in a pie. Fry in a pan with a tin of chopped anchovies and an onion, and use to stuff a shoulder or leg of pork. Use in soups, such as roasted butternut squash or parsnip, perhaps with a little apple, or enrich a mushroom soup made with dried porcini and a splash of Madeira.

SEMOLINA CAKE

This all-in-one method is easiest in a food processor, but you can use a hand-held electric whisk. It also works without almonds. Serve warm or at room temperature, with crème fraîche and poached fruit or fruit compôte.

• 3 large eggs • 200g softened butter • 200g soft brown sugar • 100g fine semolina or polenta • 100g plain flour (or half wholemeal, half white) • 100g ground almonds • 1½tsp baking powder • 1tsp vanilla extract • 1 large orange, finely grated zest and juice • 3–4tbsp milk • icing sugar, for dusting

1 Heat the oven to 180ºC/fan oven 160º/mark 4. Line a 25cm cake tin with baking parchment.
2 Crack the eggs into a food processor and add all the remaining ingredients apart from the milk and icing sugar. Blend to a smooth batter that easily drops off a spoon, adding in 3–4tbsp of milk – or more if it is needed – to ensure it is not too stiff. Pour into the tin, smooth down gently and bake for 40 minutes, or until golden and just firm to the touch in the middle.
3 Cool in the tin, before dusting generously with icing sugar ☐



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TRAVEL

AUSTRALIA | BRAZIL | MILAN



An aerial view of a Great Southern Rail train making its way through the Australian scenery

VIEW FROM THE TRACKS

IN THE FIRST OF A NEW SERIES ON JOURNEYS, **PETER HUGHES** ENJOYS A LEISURELY PASSAGE BY TRAIN FROM ADELAIDE TO SYDNEY, TAKING IN THE VISTAS AND VINEYARDS ALONG THE WAY

They called it the 'baby train' because it had only 20 coaches; the biggest have up to 35 and are around a kilometre long. As it was, we still had to board in a special terminal in Adelaide's rail freight area. There is a presence about big trains: just standing in the station they have a hauteur. And big trains have names – this was the *Indian Pacific*. Its coaches, now nearly 50 years old but recently refurbished, are tall and silvery and hauled by two hulking locomotives. The route, between Perth in the west and Sydney, 2,700 miles to the east, runs like a Plimsoll line along the bottom of Australia. It traverses two pages of the atlas and takes almost five days to do so. The train's name comes from the oceans at either end.

I joined in Adelaide, three days into the journey from Perth, and travelled in style in platinum service. My cabin had a shower and loo, and a rather upright banquette that became a firm double bed at night. Gold service cabins are half the size and mostly have bunks. Red service has reclining seats, communal showers and a café. In platinum, you have a lounge car and a separate restaurant serving unfancy fare, such as lamb shanks with mashed potato and gravy.

We trundled out of Adelaide, quickly exchanging the tower cranes in the city centre for gum trees and sparse grassland. It would take another 1,058 miles and 24 hours to reach Sydney. By air, it takes a twelfth of the time, but flying these days is a delivery system. This was travel, in touch with the land in every sense. By air, I wouldn't have had a day among the Barossa vineyards – a new excursion from the train. We sniffed, swirled and savoured wines at two cellars, before lunching at Maggie Beer's Farm Shop, something of a foodie shrine in Australia, thanks to Maggie's many TV appearances.

We stopped in the middle of the Outback for another tour at Broken Hill – a remote and weirdly romantic mining town of frilly Victorian architecture, which attracts as many artists as miners these days. Above the town, mounted on a hill, stands a sombre memorial to 814 miners who died in accidents, the first in 1885. On the train, tea was served in the cabin. The track, until now varnish smooth, began to fidget and wriggle. 'A bit rocky isn't it,' said Gloria, my stewardess, as she collected the tray. Cloistered in air-conditioned unreality, we charged across an arid heath of orange sand. A low range of sunburned hills sprawled on the horizon. That night, the rails felt rough and knobbly.

And so to Sydney, Australia's most vibrant city. It may have the energy of New York, the climate of Cannes and a setting as spectacular as San Francisco's, but our approach was sylvan. In the morning, the windows opened on hills shaggy with pasture. The train was climbing into the Blue Mountains. Outside there were cows and cockatoos, woods and water – streams, ponds and puddles in the lanes. Gloria served me breakfast. Sydney awaited ☐

ways and means

Peter Hughes was a guest of Great Southern Rail (greatsouthernrail.com.au). Advance tickets for Adelaide to Sydney, booked at least six months ahead, start at $AUS739 (about £350) for gold and $AUS1,299 (about £620) for platinum. Platinum fares include all local transfers to and from the train.

GOING THE DISTANCE

LAUREN HOLMES, WHO MOVED TO BRAZIL SEVEN YEARS AGO, REVELS IN THE PLEASURES OF REMOTE SPOTS THAT REMIND HER OF THE COUNTRY SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH

It's hard not to fall head over heels for Brazil; the first time I came here on holiday, I never left. It must have been a man, most say, but no, it was the tropical vibrancy, unstoppable sunshine and infectious smiles that took hold and wouldn't let go. Twice the size of the European Union, Brazil's vast borders promised the greatest of adventures. As a means to explore, I wrote, building a web of knowledge soon put to use planning trips of a lifetime for friends: helicopter rides over Rio sunsets; road trips blazing by Bahian beaches; and family cruises deep into the Amazon. But, in truth, in seven years, Brazil has changed. While the recent economic boom ignited the country's first internal package tours, international headlines from hosting world events put even those 'undiscovered' surf villages on the global map. Now, to skip the tourist show, you need to dig deeper. This trip was a search for authenticity, the raw warmth of Brazil that I first fell for.

We start in Brazil's first capital, Salvador: part Africa, part colonial Portugal, its rich heritage tumbles into a carnival for the senses. Yet, if the postcard-perfect Pelourinho, Salvador's historic centre, seems staged for show, it's along the beachfront promenade of bohemian Rio Vermelho where real life plays out. December 2014 saw the opening of Casa do Rio Vermelho, a new interactive museum in the former home of author Jorge Amado, while at multi-performance space Lálá, there's the chatter of cultural revival, artists spilling onto the street for sangria and squid-ink rice at nearby La Taperia.

We check into Zank hotel, where colonial high ceilings tower over butter-leather armchairs and french windows open onto snatches of the azure-blue bay, white hammocks lilting in the breeze. One stop impossible to miss is Paraíso Tropical for lunch. Here agronomist chef Beto plucks tropical fruits from his organic orchard for Brazil's best *moqueca* (salt-water fish stew) served with coconut caipirinhas so good that we almost miss the Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia where, every Saturday, live jazz draws the city's bohemians to toast the orange sun sinking into the sea.

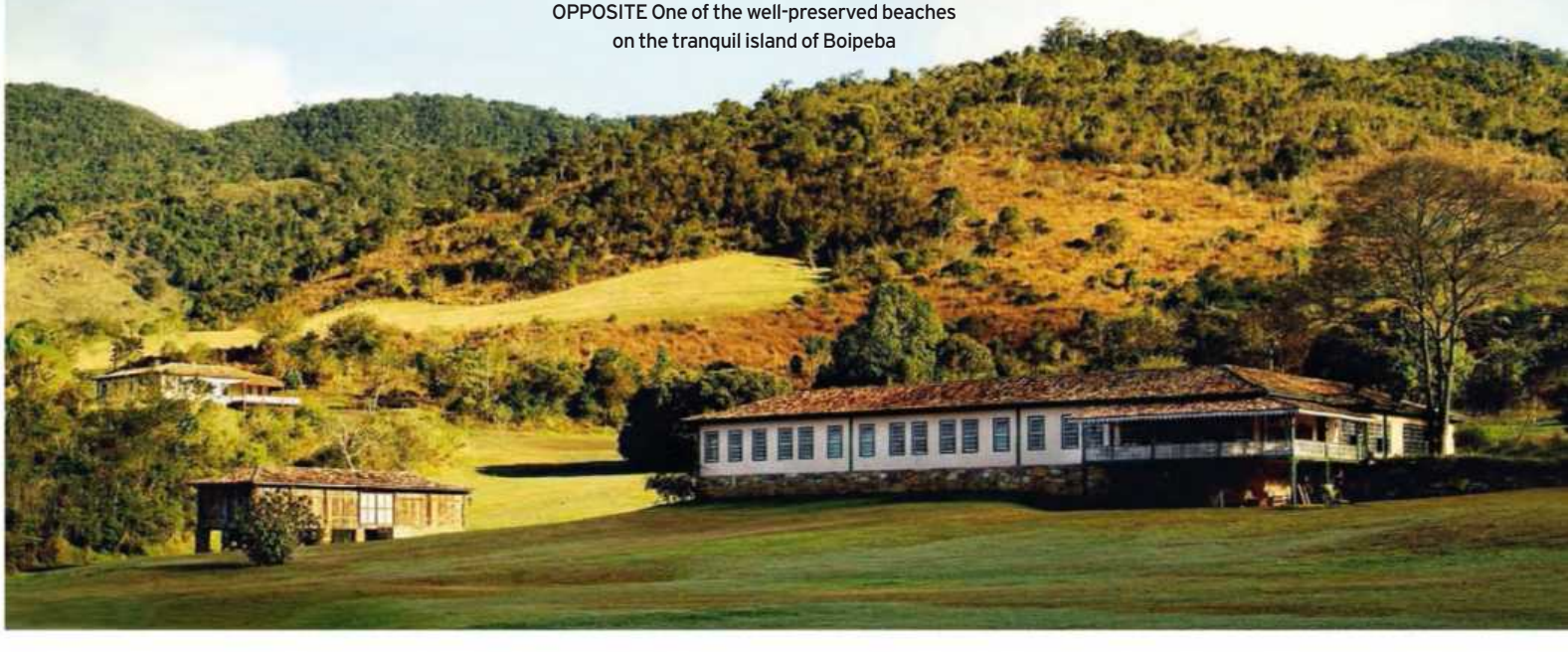
Dawn breaks the next day with a 20-minute flight by Cessna over turquoise oceans to land among coconut plantations on the idyllic, car-free island of Boipeba, a journey that takes over five hours by road and boat. This inaccessibility has thus far provided a golden shield, protecting the island's intimate atmosphere and pristine beaches. The only way to get to Moreré, the friendliest of fishing villages on the southern tip, is by tractor, and as it trundles through the Mata Atlântica rainforest, the journey rocks you into the rhythm of island time. Here, a handful of foreign-run *pousadas* (small B&Bs or guesthouses) cater to travellers looking to sleep within strolling distance of half-moon beaches, with not a soul or settlement in site. At the intimate, three-bungalow eco-pousada Casa Bobô, bountiful breakfasts are served with 360-degree views across virgin jungle, as Spanish owner Myriam coordinates ayurvedic massages and surf lessons.

Yet my favourite new discovery was the four-bedroom Casa Arasy, the dreamiest of beach houses, custom-built from reclaimed wood with sweeping sea vistas, private beach access and wonderful staff to bargain with fisherman for buckets of fresh lobster. On our last day, we take a little boat to Panther's Cove, stopping off at a makeshift bar set up on a sandbank in the middle of the sea. As we are leaving the only lunch spot around, after snapper and slow-cooked black beans, the owner hands us a giant conch shell, saying, 'This is for you to remember us by, so that you come back.'

If Moreré is Brazil's ultimate secret beach destination, then Reserva do Ibitipoca, a colonial guest house set in a 4,000 hectare private nature reserve, is its countryside counterpart. It takes a flight from Salvador, followed by a four-hour drive through the hills of Minas Gerais to get there. You would not stumble across this place, but that is much of the point. With a fully sustainable organic kitchen, the hotel is just a small part of commodity magnate and eco-warrior Renato Machado's vision for the reserve, intended to create jobs while reforesting the natural habitat of the highly endangered muriqui monkey.

While eight generous rooms overlooking a great lake ensure prize-worthy sleep, it's the personalised service that really leaves its mark. Customised adventures such as hiking or riding are interwoven with cocktails at secluded waterfalls and hot baths lit by candles. This owes much to the fact that the staff themselves own the hotel, passed to them by Renato in a progressive approach to service and sustainability. As Brazil stumbles into recession and the tumbling currency makes the country more accessible for foreign travel, projects and people such as this highlight a new path, a return to Brazil's natural richness and the purity of spirit that lies beneath the surface □

THIS PAGE The guest house Reserva do Ibitipoca is set in a 4,000-hectare private nature reserve. OPPOSITE One of the well-preserved beaches on the tranquil island of Boipeba



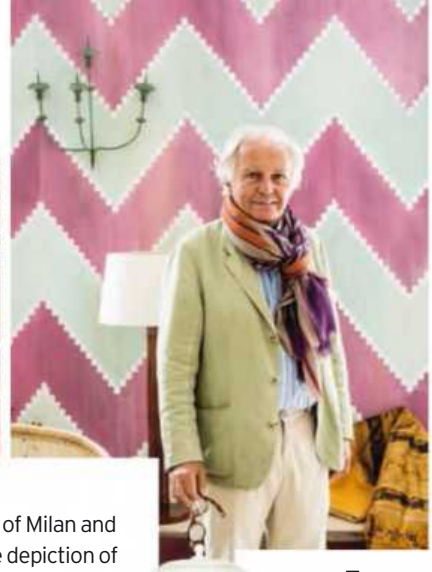


ways and means

Lauren Holmes travelled as a guest of Plan South America (020-7993 6930; plansouthamerica.com), which offers a 10-night trip from £4,203, including two nights in Salvador, four nights in Boipeba at Casa Arasy, and four nights at Reserva do Ibitipoca full-board, internal flights, return light aircraft to Boipeba and private transfers, but excludes international flights.

MILLA KONTKANEN/ALAMY







FROM FAR LEFT The courtyard of Rossana Orlandi. Piero Castellini. A view of the city from its cathedral. Fornasetti ceramics (also centre)





ask a local

MILAN

PIERO CASTELLINI OF THE ITALIAN FABRIC HOUSE C&C MILANO OFFERS TIPS ON THE MOST STYLISH PLACES TO SHOP, EAT AND DRINK IN HIS HOME CITY

PHOTOGRAPHS **JOSHUA MONAGHAN**





SHOPPING

Zona Corso Magenta, one of the oldest parts of Milan and most famous for Leonardo da Vinci's sublime depiction of *The Last Supper* in the Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie, has always been my family's base. My fabric and textile showroom **C&C Milano** (cec-milano.com) and neighbouring **Son Milano** (sonmilano.com), for my furniture and design accessories, are both in this area, on via Zenale. In my view, **Rossana Orlandi** (rossanaorlandi.com) is a true creative genius and Milan's greatest champion of contemporary design. Her eponymous gallery and shop, with a sun-dappled courtyard and café at the back, showcases unique or limited-edition works from international emerging talent. In beautiful Piazza Tommaseo – the magnolias in spring are spectacular – sister brands **Pupi Solari** for womenswear and children's clothes and **Host** for menswear (pupisolari.com) are the city's fashion benchmarks.

Brera, Milan's former artistic and bohemian quarter, is known for its cobbled streets and cornucopia of shops and bars. There are numerous browsing opportunities, but two of my favourites are the **Boffi Solferino** kitchen and bathroom showroom (boffi-solferino.com) – an architectural and design masterpiece – and the **Fornasetti** store (fornasetti.com), where the whimsical, surreal decorative creations of Piero Fornasetti are now overseen by his son, Barnaba – a good friend of mine. I always enjoy a visit to **Il Segno del Tempo** (ilsegnodeltempo.com), a brilliantly eccentric shop for canes, walking sticks, industrial furniture, sculpture and one-off design pieces. For fashion, I go to **Massimo Alba** (massimoalba.com).

Revitalised for Expo Milano 2015, the harbour and canal area around Darsena and Porta Genova is the trendiest part of the city for the young designer crowd. Via Savona and via Tortona are the hub for shops, studios, bars and restaurants. For fabulous furniture and accessories in bronze and brass, I go to **Carati Ambrogio** (caratibronzista.com). For lighting, nowhere is better than **G B Tansini** (tansinigb.it), which has a showroom at viale d'Annunzio Gabriele and a warehouse on the edge of the city with thousands of chandeliers.





ANTICLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT The city's tram network, established in 1881, now covers 170 kilometres. A selection of children's clothes in Pupi Solari. At La Latteria San Marco, *spaghetti al limone* is a speciality

FOOD AND DRINK

After a huge restoration project, **Leonardo's Vineyard** (vignadileonardo.com) opened this year for Expo Milano 2015. Combine a trip there and to the wonderful Renaissance Casa degli Atellani with breakfast or a light lunch at the newly opened café. In Brera, **La Latteria San Marco** is a traditional Milanese trattoria, where the welcome is warm and the food superb. Try the *risotto all'arturo*, with its cold, freshly squeezed tomato sauce, or the delicious *spaghetti al limone*. **Langosteria 10** on via Savona (langosteria10.it) is one of the best fish restaurants in Milan, offering a huge variety of super-fresh seafood in an attractive environment. Don't miss Porta Genova's lively **Metropolitan Market** (mercatometropolitano.com) for amazing produce, regional specialities and street food.

ACCOMMODATION

A stone's throw from La Scala, the **Mandarin Oriental** (mandarinoriental.com/milan) is Milan's new hotspot. Architecture and interiors – overseen by design maestro Antonio Citterio – are at the heart of the hotel but, for wow factor, check out the geometric-patterned Mandarin Bar Bistro. Double rooms start at about £600 □

STOCKISTS

Merchandise from these companies is featured editorially in this issue. Information is checked at the time of going to press, but *House & Garden* cannot guarantee that prices will not change or items will be in stock at the time of publication.

A–B

ABBOTT & BOYD *020-7351 9985; abbottandboyd.co.uk*
ANOTHER COUNTRY *020-7486 3251; anothercountry.com*
ANTHROPOLOGIE *00800-0026 8476; anthropologie.eu*
ARJUMAND'S WORLD *arjumandsworld.com*
THE BASKET ROOM *07853-158625; thebasketroom.com*
BIRGIT ISRAEL *020-7376 7255; birgitisrael.com*
BRYAN REEVES TRIBAL GATHERING LONDON *020-7221 6650; tribalgatheringlondon.com*

C–D

CASAMANCE *0844-369 0104; casamance.com*
CHRISTIAN LIAIGRE *020-7287 6392; christian-liaigre.fr*
COLEFAX AND FOWLER *020-8874 6484; colefax.com*
THE CONRAN SHOP *0844-848 4000; conranshop.co.uk*
CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS CENTRE *020-7242 9644; cpaceramics.com*
COX LONDON *020-8880 3923; coxlondon.com*
DARKROOM *020-7831 7244; darkroomlondon.com*
DAVID SEYFRIED *020-7823 3848; davidseyfried.com*
DE LE CUONA *01753-830301; delecuona.com*
DOMINIC SCHUSTER *020-8874 0762; dominic-schuster.com*
DO SOUTH SHOP *020-8771 0500; dosouthshop.com*

E–F

FLOCK *020-8445 4777; flock-living.com*
FRANÇOIS GILLES *07803-237217; francoisgilles.co.uk*

G–H

G P & J BAKER *01202-266700; gpandjbaker.com*
GEORGE SPENCER DESIGNS *020-7584 3003; georgespencer.com*
GISBERT RENTMEISTER *020-7349 1477; rentmeister-manufaktur.de*
GUBI *00-45-3332 6368; gubi.dk*
HEXAGONE *020-7288 1444; hexagone-uk.com*
HOLLAND & SHERRY *020-7352 4798; interiors.hollandandsherry.com*
HOLLY HUNT *020-7399 3280; hollyhunt.com*
HOWE *020-7730 7987; howelondon.com*

I–J

J ROBERT SCOTT *020-7376 4705; jrobertscott.com*
JAMB *020-7730 2122; jamb.co.uk*
JOSS GRAHAM *020-7730 4370; jossgraham.com*
JUSTIN VAN BREDA *020-7349 7089; j-v-b.com*

K–L

KIRKBY DESIGN *01623-756699; kirkbydesign.com*
KVADRAT/ RAF SIMONS *kvadratrafsimons.com*
LALIBELLA *07930-607178; lalibella.co.uk*
LAPICIDA *020-3012 1000; lapicida.com*
LARUSI *020-7428 0256; larusi.com*

M–N

MINT *020-7225 2228; mintshop.co.uk*
THE NEW CRAFTSMEN *020-7148 3190; thenewcraftsmen.com*

O–P

OCHRE *020-7096 7372; ochre.net*
O'DELL'S *07730-129416; odellsstore.com*
OKA *0844-815 7380; okadirect.com*
ORIGINAL BTC *01993-882251; uk.originalbtc.com*
PAOLO MOSCHINO FOR NICHOLAS HASLAM *020-8623 0445; nicholashaslam.com*
PETITE FRITURE *00-33-1-44 54 13 95; petitefriture.com*
PIERRE FREY *020-7376 5599; pierrefrey.com*
PLUMO *020-8889 9945; plumo.com*
POLIFORM *020-7368 7600; poliformuk.com*
PORTA ROMANA *020-7352 0440; portaromana.co.uk*
PUCKHABER *020-3304 7327; puckhaberdecorativeantiques.com*

Q–R

QUINDRY *07958-517017; quindry.net*
RALPH LAUREN HOME *020-7535 4600; ralphlaurenhome.com*
RAPTURE & WRIGHT *01608-652442; raptureandwright.co.uk*
RICHARD TAYLOR DESIGNS *020-7351 2567; richardtaylordesigns.co.uk*
ROCKETT ST GEORGE *01444-253391; rockettstgeorge.co.uk*
ROSE UNIACKE *020-7730 7050; roseuniacke.com*
ROWEN & WREN *01276-451077; rowenandwren.co.uk*
RUBELLI *020-7349 1590; rubelli.com*

S–T

SAFOMASI *00-91-11 416 00863; safomasi.com*
SIMON ORRELL DESIGNS *020-7371 9339; simonorrelldesigns.com*
SOANE *020-7730 6400; soane.co.uk*
SURFACE VIEW *0118-922 1327; surfaceview.co.uk*
TALISMAN *020-7730 7800; talismanlondon.com*
TEKTURA WALLCOVERINGS *020-7536 3300; tektura.com*
TISSUS D'HÉLÈNE *020-7352 9977; tissusdhelene.co.uk*
TMO LIGHTING *01935-891525; tmolighting.com*
TOM FAULKNER *020-7351 7272; tomfaulkner.co.uk*
TOYINE SELLERS *00-33-6-70 08 42 01; toyinesellers.com*
TURNELL & GIGON *020-7259 7280; turnellandgigongroup.com*

U–Z

WILLER *020-7937 3518; willer.co.uk*
VESSEL GALLERY *020-7727 8001; vesselgallery.com*
VIADUCT *020-7278 8456; viaduct.co.uk*
VIRGINIA WHITE COLLECTION *07879-674439; virginiawhitecollection.com*
ZINC TEXTILE *01623-756699; zinctextile.com* □



GQ BAR

GQ Bar Dubai

JW Marriott Marquis Hotel

Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

gqbar.com |

CONDÉ NAST INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANTS

A Gift From Us!...



1. DU MAURIER WATCHES. Diamonds, rose gold and mother of pearl take centre stage on this stunning, 'Rebecca' ladies watch. This fabulous, Swiss-made, limited edition timepiece will add elegance and a bit of sparkle to every occasion. Rebecca ladies watch, £485. See the full collection at www.dumaurierwatches.com or call 08455 193074.

2. Beautiful bedding for dogs by award-winning British designers, **CHARLEY CHAU.** Classic greywash rattan dog basket available in five sizes, shown here dressed with a deep-filled luxury mattress in stone and faux-fur dog blanket in brown bear. Machine washable everything. Available from www.charleychau.com or call 0161 848 8702 for more information.

3. Designer jeweller **LIZ TYLER** delights in creating individual pieces always with a sense of movement in the flow of the design. Liz does regular exhibitions across the country. Visit www.liztyler.com or contact Liz on 01258 820222.

4. Niche perfume house **PELL WALL** make exclusive fragrances, including the Devana, pictured, voted a Greatest Modern Fragrance by Basenotes. It is fresh, herbal and fun, with just a whiff of scandal, priced from £36-£67 online at www.pellwall.com and available to try at the Taj Khazana at the St. James' Court Hotel, London. Call 01630 652546 for more details.

5. Style never goes out of fashion! **COBRA & BELLAMY** make affordable classically designed watches conveying timeless elegance. Pictured is the retro inspired Zennor, reminiscent of the 1960s. The Zennor is available in stainless steel at £119 or 21 carat gold plated at £139 with a black or brown leather strap. The Zennor is a favourite of Sienna Miller, here is a quote from her, "Cobra & Bellamy Watches are classic, beautiful and affordable, I love all of them". To see the full range of Cobra & Bellamy Watches, go to www.cobrabellamywatches.co.uk or call 01736 732112.

6. Treat yourself or give as a gift, **HAMMAMAS** the "Clever Cotton Towel" is practical as well as stylish. This absorbent, fast-drying, premium cotton towel can also be worn as a sarong or beach dress. It won't take up much room and comes in a waterproof pouch. Quote HOUSE for 20% off and free UK shipping (expires 31/12/2015). Visit www.hammamas.com or call 01580 714714 to find out more.

7. Showcasing the finest gianduja products from Turin, Italy, **BONIERI**'s traditional recipe chocolates and stylish 'Bella' selection boxes combine exquisite taste with Italian passion and style. Recently awarded 3 Great Taste gold stars, Bonieri's range includes dairy and gluten free pralines, crumbly nougat, luxury spreads and much more. Stockists include Selfridges and Harrods. Discover more online at www.bonieri.com or call 0844 4148588.

8. BUTTERFLY DOMES. Glass domes filled with butterflies. Choose the butterflies you would like in your dome or select one from the collection on the website. Visit www.butterflydomes.co.uk or call 07951 110147 for more details.

























9. This beautiful pair of earrings is part of a collection of jewellery by **OTTOMANIA.** Beautiful handmade jewellery made of gemstones, 14K gold-fill, 9K gold and Sterling silver. The materials and colour combinations make this collection unique and elegant. Visit www.ottomania.nl for more details or call +31 23 737 04 26. Also available wholesale.

10. Entirely handmade and hand painted, **AMARANTHINE BLOOMS** specialises in the most luxurious imitation flowers. Their blooms are perfect replicas of the real thing that won't wilt or fade but bring enjoyment for years to come as they remain perfect every day. Shop online at www.amaranthineblooms.com and enter code HOUSE1 at check-out to receive 20% off your order (offer expires 31/12/15).

11. IVAR is a London-based design house celebrated for their iconic, emotive and smart design. Their enthusiasm for watches has inspired a line of handmade watch boxes using fine veneers. The illustrated Time Lines watch winder is handmade using fine veneers and features an innovative magnifying glass on the lid to transform your watch into a table clock. Discover more at www.ivarlondon.com or call 020 7584 2887.

12. DIANA PORTER CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY. British jewellery designer, Diana Porter, specialises in beautifully handcrafted, unique pieces. Diana works to commission, creating one off designs, hand etching customers own words onto the jewellery and re-working clients existing pieces. Call 01179 090225, email web@dianaporter.co.uk or visit www.dianaporter.co.uk for more information.

13. M&J LONDON, offers an exquisite range of candles. Hand poured in London, each beautifully scented candle comes in its own recycled glass jar in environmentally friendly, yet luxurious packaging. Visit www.mj-london.com to view their collection.

14. VANILO – A mix of Colombia's rich heritage and contemporary styles. Hand-crafted wearable art in filigree and gold. The pictured earrings are 24ct yellow gold vermeil on sterling silver, £255. Shop online at www.shopvanilo.com see them on Instagram and Twitter: @vanilojewellery or call 07508 844518 to find out more.

15. Need a Christmas gift that tells the lady in your life just how truly special she is? Then look no further than **SOFFIAB** luxury silk dressing gowns. Two limited edition collections uniquely lined with soft, sensual cotton featuring different finishes depending on your climate. Brushed cotton for cooler climes and feather light sea island cotton for warmer environments. Hand stitched in New York and designed by a Brit, these robes make a beautiful accompaniment to any bedroom, sizing comes in XS, S, M and L. A variety of eleven different colour combinations and prints, find them at www.soffiab.com/HG and receive complimentary UK shipping.

16. KETURAH specialises in unique handcrafted gemstone jewellery, designed and created in Devon. Each piece is individually handmade using precious and semi-precious gemstones, freshwater pearls and finished in sterling silver. Visit www.keturah.co.uk or contact 07908 060476 for enquiries.

17. BEE FREE BOX offers a range of boxes filled with high quality food and supplements that are free from gluten, wheat, yeast and dairy, catering for children, adults and even your beloved dog! Designed by a clinical nutritionist, this is the perfect gift for your health loving friends or a perfect way for you to kick off the New Year! Buy online at www.beefreebox.com or email info@beefeebox.com

18. Luxury leather goods handmade in Italy with vegetable-tanned Swedish and Italian leathers. Only available online, **OPPERMANN** cuts out the middlemen to offer their products at 1/3rd of the normal retail price. Pictured: Palissy 25-hour bag, £395. Also in Black, Cognac and Navy. Visit oppermann-london.com or call 020 3086 8546 for more details.

19. Inspired by the personal adventures of founder Mark Jordan, **AROMA HOLIDAY**'s luxury English home fragrance brand invites you to relax and take a well-earned 'Staycation'. Transport each room with sensual fragrances, to lost moments in time, stimulating fond thoughts of past exotic holidays, romantic nights or long forgotten childhood memories. 12 destinations to explore! Available at Amazon, www.loveexcellence.co.uk and www.Frageezi.com or visit www.aromaholiday.com

20. The X1 Cooper Red razor from **BOLIN WEBB** is a striking addition to the award-winning Bolin Webb collection. This razor looks fantastic and wants to be seen as well as used. Award winning design and performance shaving combined. Fitted with Gillette's Fusion ProGlide blade and presented in an exclusive gift box. A great gift for Christmas when combined with their innovative magnetic stand in black. Razor available for £65 from www.bolinwebb.com and at Harrods, The Conran Shop and Fortnum & Mason. Call 01572 868005 for more information.

21. BLUE VELVET, the home of contemporary and luxury footwear, direct from the heart of Europe. Always one step ahead, they have established themselves on their quality and first-rate service. Buy online at www.bluevelvetshoes.com visit them at 174 Kings Road, London, SW3 4UP or call 020 7376 7442 to find out more.

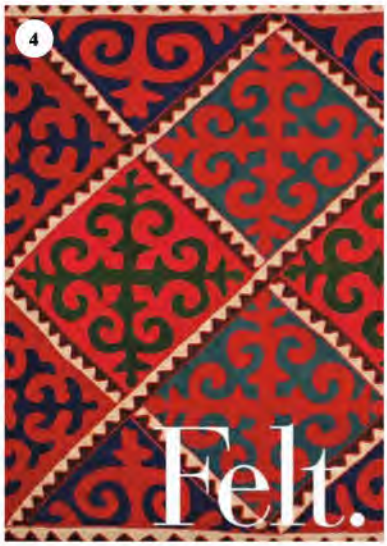
22. WATCH AGENCY specialise in buying, selling and servicing. They sell new, ex-display and pre-owned watches by world leading brands, including Rolex, Cartier, Patek Philippe, Breitling, and more. Pictured 1. Rolex Datejust 178274 – RRP £7950 New £6000. With prices starting at less than half price of retail, contact them by calling 01702 395100 or visiting www.watchagency.co.uk for more information. They also supply jewellery at discount prices.

A Gift From Us

Advertisers should contact 020 7499 9080 ext. 3705

Treading The Boards...























1. ATLANTICO RUGS. Exclusive pure wool handmade tapestry rugs. Each year they design and develop new patterns working along with the major interior designers to create the perfect rug for a room. A small selection of designs can be seen on the website but many more are available. Visit www.atlanticorugs.com email anne@atlanticorugs.com or call 020 8780 5288.

2. TRUNK SURFACES: Finlay Grey Oak chevron parquet, is a functional and timeless wood floor. The finish is fumed, limed and oiled to leave a warm grey hue. Trunk treats each parquet floor as a bespoke project ensuring a balanced, aesthetically pleasing finish. Parquet and plank floors are handmade to order for each client. Finlay grey oiled is without a doubt a stunning finish. To find out more, visit www.trunksurfaces.com or call 020 7498 9665.

3. THE WEST SUSSEX ANTIQUE TIMBER COMPANY are a company set in the South Downs of England. As they supply the best traditional, solid oak floors from sustainable sources, it is no surprise that their clients include The National Trust and English Heritage. They supply and fit random width planks (from 150mm to 280mm wide) hand planed and stained on site to your choice of colour with their own range of antique oils. They also supply and fit parquet, versaille and engineered flooring and offer a complete in-house joinery and fitting service. To view their ranges, call 01403 700139 email info@wsatimber.com or visit www.wsatimber.com

4. FELT's unique collection of rugs, floor cushions and cushions are handmade by the nomadic peoples of Kyrgyzstan. From dazzling and bright to elegant and subtle, they suit both traditional and contemporary interiors. Viewing by appointment in London SW12. Call 020 8772 0358 or visit www.feltrugs.co.uk for more information.

5. PAD LIFESTYLE is an online lifestyle collective offering many unique and inspiring home and fashion brands from across the world. With so many chic, curious and eclectic pieces to find it's definitely worth a look. This gorgeous hand woven wool rug from Berlin design house The Knots, is perfect for a cosy interior. Shaggy and chic in a classic Berber style, it features a distinctive geometric pattern rendered in charcoal hues, set against an ivory field. Visit www.padlifestyle.com to shop this look or call 0131 225 9012 to find out more.

6. THE RUG STORE specialise in a wide selection of new, old and antique Persian, Turkish, Caucasian and Turkman carpets. Various antique, old and new kilims are available. They also offer a professional hand-cleaning and restoration service. They buy old and antique carpets – even damaged rugs. Part-exchange and evaluations. Visit 312 Upper Richmond Road West, East Sheen, London SW14 7JN. Call/fax 020 8876 0070 email info@rugstoreonline.co.uk or view www.rugstoreonline.co.uk

7. CRUCIAL TRADING. Created using shades inspired by day and night, Wool Audrey's four new exciting colour combinations Daylight, Daybreak, Nightfall and Twilight are perfect for adding personality and introducing electrifying design statements within the home. Image shown is WFS6 Daybreak. To find out more, visit www.crucial-trading.com or call 01562 743747.

8. THE BRITISH WOOD FLOORING COMPANY specialises in reclaimed wood flooring, antique Oak floors, parquet block flooring, Parquet de Versailles and bespoke solid wood floors. They work with clients of discerning taste and who appreciate the beauty of having original, authentic wood floors in their home. Visit www.britishwoodflooring.co.uk email info@britishwoodflooring.co.uk or call 01428 604700 to find out more.

9. FRANCESCA GENTILLI specialises in beautiful off-the-peg and bespoke rugs, all hand woven in either cotton, wool, hemp or jute by master craftsmen in India. Her rugs will transform a room, bringing style and personality to both contemporary and traditional interiors. Visit www.francescagentilli.com email fkgentilli@gmail.com or call 07779 660690 to find out more.

10. A SWEDISH HOME offers traditionally handwoven cotton rag rugs inspired by old Swedish "trasmattor" but in designs to fit todays' lifestyle. In addition they stock Ekelund products and a range of Swedish gifts for the home, many featuring the Dala horse. Visit www.aswedishhome.co.uk or call 01473 430460 for more information.

11. A&A ORIENTAL & PERSIAN RUGS offer a huge selection of handmade, antique and contemporary rugs. Let them know your requirements and they will visit you with a wide selection. Repair and restoration service. Pictured is the semi-antique Persian Heriz, size approximately 5m by 4m, excellent condition. For more information, call 01794 511988, email aandaoriental@btconnect.com or visit the website at www.antiqueorientalcarpets.com

The Room Refresh...



1. Gorgeous own-brand pieces from **ARIGHI BIANCHI**, a unique family furniture shop with a reputation for quality, service and value. Shop online at www.arighibianchi.co.uk or visit their iconic Grade II listed building in Macclesfield – just over the road from the mainline train station. Call 01625 613333 to request a brochure.

2. VILLAVERDE creates handcrafted lighting, made in Italy for interiors throughout the world. The Arezzo metal lantern, designed by Claudio Marco for Villaverde, is available in various sizes and metal finishes. They offer a lighting consultancy service, enquire at their London showroom, 618-620 Kings Road, London SW6 2DU, call 020 7610 9797 or visit their website www.villaverdeltd.com to find out more.



3. MOFFEE is a family run business based in London, re-interpreting classic lines with a contemporary finish. Precious materials and incredible craftsmanship result in timeless, classic pieces of marble furniture to last a lifetime. Product shown is the 'Betsy' console table, £480. To find out more, visit www.moffeeltd.com or call 07969 585238.



4. CHLOE ALBERRY specialises in door and cabinet fittings. Based in London's Notting Hill, her shop is a treasure trove of ideas for any home. Her latest collection features these fun door handles made from dinosaurs and toy cars. Find the shop at 84 Portobello Rd, London, W11, call 020 7727 0707 or visit www.chloealberry.com to find out more.



5. W SITCH & CO. Working in the trade since 1776, the Sitch family moved to their current premises in the 1870s from where they continue to specialise in the reproduction and renovation of antique lighting, be it the repair, rewiring or renovation of your own light fitting, or by offering you one from their selection of thousands of antiques or one of their reproductions which are made on the premises following traditional techniques. For further information, visit them at 48 Berwick Street, London W1F 8JD, call 020 7437 3776, or browse www.wsitch.co.uk



6. Make sure to check out **SKOLNIK-LONDON** to see the award winning Statesman games table in action. It seamlessly combines Chess, Backgammon and Bridge at the touch of a button, and in the most elegant of designs. Visit www.skolnik-london.com to find out more, call 020 8347 8434 or 07974 726288 or email games@skolnik-london.com



7. This Winter, the **POOKY** people have added a fabulous new range of pendants in metalwork, blown glass and ceramics; and they've added desk lights and wall lights too! Just like their table and floor lamp brethren, the new range is as beautiful and affordable as ever. Everything is easily browsed at www.pooky.com and delivered free. Email hello@pooky.com or call them on 020 7351 3003 and their customer services team will help however they can.



8. Add a sophisticated touch to your living room thanks to **MODECOR**. The company is offering readers a generous price for its iconic reproduction 1956 Charles Eames lounge chair and ottoman, reducing the price from £775 to just £550. This handsome chair is available in a choice of finishes including; palisander rosewood (pictured), oak plywood or walnut wood, as well as black (pictured), brown or white leather upholstery. To view the full range or to claim your offer, visit www.modecor.co.uk or call 020 3239 3902 and use code HOME7 (whilst stocks last).



9. SISSIBOX bridges the gap between art and design by creating interior pieces around thought provoking issues. Under the theme of "Money" Sissibox is launching their new conceptual fabric '£5 Note' which is a giant print of the current five pound note. UK printed on high quality 100% cotton half panama, '£5 Note' comes in three colours; stone, verdigris and charcoal. It is available in a choice of three cushion sizes as well as made to order curtains. Contact 07776 468648 or visit www.sissibox.com for more information.



10. CAMERON DESIGN HOUSE was founded by designer Ian Cameron, who combines his Finnish heritage and London upbringing to create unique, contemporary and bespoke lighting. Handcrafted from their Primrose Hill (London) studio, Cameron Design House combines natural and man-made materials to create elegant pieces boasting strong sculptural aesthetics and conscientious design. To see more of their beautiful range, visit www.camerondesignhouse.com or call 07454 957240 for more information.



11. Each pure cashmere throw, cushion and blanket from **GILLIAN WEIR** is super soft, luxurious and hand woven to your very own preferred colour, size, weight and finish. The ultimate bespoke indulgence for any interior scheme! Visit them at www.gillianweir.co.uk for more information or be their guest at Maison et Objet, Paris, 22nd-26th January 2016.



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The Room Refresh... Continued









12. HOWARD CHAIRS are internationally renowned as makers of beautiful upholstered furniture. Each piece is painstakingly hand-sprung and stitched in their own workshop, using traditional methods and the best raw materials. Established in 1825, the fine attention-to-detail and craftsmanship will last for generations. Clients can select from their collection or they can make to your own specification. They also provide a soft furnishings service including drapes and walling. Call 020 7482 2156 or visit their showroom at 30-31 Lyme Street, London NW1 0EE. View their website at www.howardchairs.com or email info@howardchairs.com

13. JANE HAMILTON, portrait and figure sculptor. Her sculptures have energy and pathos; when doing a portrait, whether young or old, she approaches her work with the sensitivity and truthfulness needed for a likeness. To see more of Jane's work, visit www.janehamilton-sculpture.com or call 01295 750636.

14. This leather Egg chair from **HICKS & HICKS** is fully covered in vintage leather with contrasting stitching, seat cushion and sits on an aluminium base which swivels completely. Available in Denim too! £1,410. Free delivery To find out more, visit www.hicksandhicks.com or call 01872 530761.

15. SOMETHING DIFFERENT is a true treasure trove. It's full of eclectic and unique pieces sourced from around the world; one-off pieces of furniture, beautiful and colourful textiles, cushions made from vintage saris, unusual artefacts, wonderful jewellery and much more. Products shown are the gold filigree lanterns and mirrors, from £42. Visit www.something-different.uk.com call 01730 858151 or visit their Midhurst shop to find out more.







16. GLAZEBROOK & CO create quintessentially British silver and stainless steel cutlery to the highest quality. This delightful range is Old English mirror finish stainless steel with cream handled knives (dishwasher safe). Set of six at £300. To investigate, visit www.glazebrook.com or call 020 7731 7135.

17. HAMPTON LIVING is a luxury home and lifestyle boutique bringing the relaxed elegance of the east coast to you and your home. They offer a full range of furniture, home accessories, linens, and lifestyle accessories. The Flora Round Bench in grey linen £320, pictured here, is available on their website www.hamptonliving.co.uk or call 07515 397956. Hampton Living also provide a range of interior design services available via their website.



18. BEBA HOME is an online furniture and homewares boutique stocking exclusive original pieces from around the world. Everything is personally sourced by sisters Helen and Lynn resulting in that elusive bespoke look without the designer price-tag. For more information, visit www.bebahome.co.uk or call 0141 338 6169.

19. ALDGATE HOME restore original architectural window mirrors, perfect for display in the home and garden area. A delivery and installation service can be offered. View their collection at www.aldgatehome.com call 07785 296830 or email shop@aldgatehome.com to find out more.







20. PATRICK IRELAND MIRRORS design and manufacture a range of beautiful, hand finished, framed mirrors in their East Sussex workshops. As well as their own designs, the illustrated Trumeau mirror is just one example of the many framed mirrors commissioned, manufactured and finished to their clients' own specifications. To view the online framed mirror catalogue, visit www.patrickirelandmirrors.com call 01435 813158, or email pi@pimirrors.com

21. BARNBY DESIGN. Handcrafting beautiful furniture from their studio workshop at the foot of The Black Mountains, just outside the picturesque town of Hay-on-Wye. The pictured 'Frame Desk' is available in various combinations, see the website for details. The full range is available at www.barnbydesign.co.uk or call Rob on 07816 533074 for more information.





22. DINING CHAIR COMPANY is dedicated to producing the highest quality dining chairs at competitive prices. Their chairs are made to order with your own choice of wood, fabric and trim. They offer a bespoke service, creating original designs where required. To find out more, visit www.diningchair.co.uk or contact them on 020 7259 0422.

23. For more than 40 years **JAMES MAYOR FURNITURE** have designed and produced bespoke fitted, painted furniture for the entire home. They can bring your design ideas to life, creating interior cabinetry that includes wardrobes, TV units and bookcases, kitchens and wall panelling as well as one-off freestanding pieces. Their work is renowned for its clean lines and quality craftsmanship and their reputation has been built upon reliability and value for money. An on-site survey and consultancy service is available for larger jobs. Call 01213 281643 or visit www.jamesmayor.co.uk for more details.

24. AMY REBER is a multifaceted surface and textile designer with a fervour for drawing, rich colours, pattern, and design. With her quintessential and prolific design style, Amy is dedicated to producing fresh, modern, yet certainly timeless designs. Her recent collection 'Cocam' is featured in the photo. Visit www.amyreber.com or call +1 540 604 6851.

25. TRUNK BESPOKE DOORS – Made to measure, external and internal fire rated doors in a variety of classic and modern styles. They provide a beautiful range of architrave and skirting to complete your joinery requirements. Doors start from £135+vat. Call 0800 470 3351 or visit www.trunkdoors.com to find out more.



26. For more than 90 years, **TITCHMARSH & GOODWIN** have been handcrafting stunningly beautiful bespoke wooden furniture at their workshops in England for designers and clients all over the world. Their highly skilled team of cabinet-makers, wood-turners, hand-carvers and French polishers are simply the best in the business at making fine furniture in the traditional way using sustainable, characterful woods. They are very proud of the quality that they can achieve and, as every piece is made entirely from scratch, they can give you something you really want. Call 01473 252158 for a brochure or visit www.titchmarsh-goodwin.co.uk

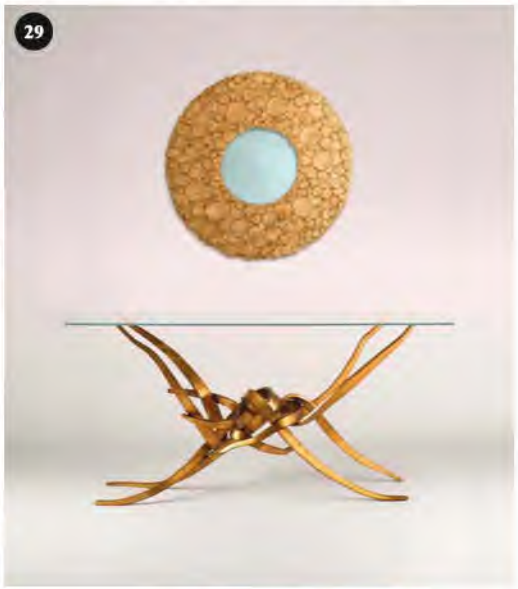


27. These unique letter racks from **EEVA KRISTIINA** can be fully personalised to suit any occasion. Customised with the address of your choice and featuring a special tailored postmark, these letter racks make a highly commemorative gift. Order online at www.eevakristiina.co.uk or call 020 8123 2255 for more details.



28. Put the finishing touches to your home with the contemporary range of cushions, fabrics and lampshades from **WENDY KAYE**. Wendy's designs combine Mid-Century and Scandinavian influences with a fresh and modern colour palette. For more information, visit www.wendykaye.co.uk or call 01892 231405.





29. ADAM WILLIAMS DESIGN patinated bronze furniture. Featured are the stunning Lenox console table, available in a variety of finishes and one of the exciting new range of mirrors being launched by Adam Williams Design, available in a range of sizes from 1m, finished in antique gold or gilded silver. Offered in bespoke dimensions, their tables and mirrors would be a desirable acquisition to either traditional or contemporary interiors. Call 01749 830505 email info@adamwilliamsdesign.co.uk or visit www.adamwilliamsdesign.co.uk to view the complete collection.



30. ANNA KASPER is an exciting new American designer with a focus on contemporary abstract art. She creates these beautiful paintings in her studio, with her work also extending to a line of luxury cushions which she makes with her mother. To find out more,visit www.annakasperinteriors.com or call +1 414 688 0017.



31. PK VENEERING. Add a stylish touch to your home with these fabulous Wine Storage Cubes! Offering four different sizes, and with spaces for four to ten bottles, these cubes will suit every interior. The Veneers are available in walnut, oak, birdseye maple, cherry and burr walnut, other veneers on request, prices start at £185, including UK delivery. To find out more, call 01270 253460 or visit www.pkveneering.co.uk

32. OLD BOOT SOFAS, English handcrafted leather sofas. Chester starts from £1490, it's available in various colours and sizes, extremely comfy, exclusive leather with free UK delivery within two weeks. To receive £100 discount reducing the sofa to £1390, visit www.oldbootsofas.com or call 020 7736 3738 and use code HG100.





33. COLLECTIVELY ARTISAN LTD specialise in beautifully hand crafted, vibrantly coloured ceramics. Featured is the "Lava" colour blend showing various unique designs. Quote "HGJAN" for 10% off your first order at www.collectivelyartisan.com or call 07540 840929 or visit their Bristol showroom.

34. For the most gorgeous Christmas gift, take a look at **PUNICA**'s fabulous range of beautiful homewares. With the utmost commitment to quality workmanship and lasting appeal, their collection enables you to experience luxurious textures and beautiful patterns which are reminiscent of exotic places, sunshine and pleasurable times that enrich the comforts of home. Visit www.punica.co.uk email info@punica.co.uk or call 07979 523832 for more information.



35. REVIVAL BEDS using time honoured techniques. There are 18 bed designs available in a number of painted and natural wood finishes (colour matching service available). Includes free delivery and installation, as well as a 10 year guarantee. Request a brochure at www.revivalbeds.co.uk or call 01777 869669 to find out more.



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The Room Refresh... Continued





36. Looking to add a regal touch to your bedroom? Look no further than the Crochet luxury nightstand from **SWANKY INTERIORS**' Boca Do Lobo collection. Whether you are looking for a statement piece or beautiful lights to illuminate your home, Swanky Interiors have collections to suit stylish tastes. To see their ever-growing ranges and buy online, visit www.swankyinteriors.co.uk or call 020 3397 4874 for more information.

37. DEVOL KITCHENS–Designers and makers of handmade English kitchen cupboards. They offer a selection of classic Georgian and Shaker painted furniture and the Air kitchen, a retro classic of the future. Their most recent addition, the highly acclaimed Sebastian Cox Kitchen by deVOL, is a unique urban rustic design. All deVOL furniture is made in their workshops in Leicestershire and can be viewed at Cotes Mill, a beautifully renovated watermill, or their new London showroom in Clerkenwell. Visit www.devolkitchens.co.uk or call 01509 261000 for more information.

38. ORCHID is the UK's leading retailer of Oriental furniture, lamps and accessories available online and in its substantial Chelsea and Hampshire showrooms. Beautiful handmade furniture and restored antiques with masses of finishing touches for fabulous gift ideas or to transform your home. For inspiration, visit www.orchidfurniture.co.uk or call 020 7384 2443. Worldwide Delivery and bespoke services available.





39. THINGS THAT SING is an original collection of hand-finished, soft furnishings for every room. Choose from a diverse mix of styles designed to inspire, complement and uplift – a celebration of life, love and the universe. Includes custom colours and bespoke designs. Visit www.thingsthatsing.etsy.com or call 0151 538 6324 to find out more.



40. REASON HOME are inspired by the vibrancy and traditions of Indian textiles and works closely with skilled artisans to block-print, by hand, their exclusive designs onto natural fabrics. From stylish accent cushions to luxurious soft quilts and bathroom accessories, they have adapted classic Indian designs into exclusive, contemporary products for urban lives. For more information, visit www.reasonhome.co.uk or call 07740 102549.



41. PULLMAN EDITIONS designs, commissions and publishes striking original posters which capture the enduring appeal of Art Deco. Their newly commissioned posters feature winter sports, glamorous resorts around the world, and the world's greatest historic automobiles. All £395 each. Call 020 7730 0547 or view and buy online at www.pullmaneditions.com



42. JONATHAN CHARLES. This hand painted Regency inspired Chinoiserie decoration from the Hampton Collection by Jonathan Charles provides the perfect finishing touch to any interior. To find out more, visit www.jonathancharles.com email london@jonathancharles.com or call 020 7351 912.



43. HANDMADE IN BLIGHTY design and make a range of unique wooden bowls, chopping boards, utensils and homeware in Somerset using high quality British wood and sustainable materials. Each piece is handmade using traditional and modern skills, and can be personalised to ensure customers get exactly what they need. Visit www.handmadeinblighty.com or call 07931 834650 for more information.



44. CB HOME are dedicated to bringing affordable cushion covers to the market . Their Highland Mist range is expanding to 12 colours in December 2015, the new ones will be Ochre, Charcoal, Heather, Dark Blue and Cranberry. All 12 colours will also be available in a standard 17inch or a large 22inch. To find out more, visit www.cb-home.co.uk or call 0161 772 0508.



45. Get your home ready for the New Year with a beautifully bespoke sofa or chair from **MULTIYORK**. With over 50 styles to choose from, each piece is handmade in Norfolk and is available in a wide choice of fabrics including designer ranges with High-Street fashion brand Monsoon, Linwood and Sanderson as well as Multiyork's in-house Studio Collection. To find out more, visit www.multiyork.co.uk or call 0333 358 3325



46. FREYA & FARLEY candles are handmade in Kent using only soy wax and high quality fragrance. With a variety of unique scent to fill your home or gift to others with their luxury gift service. Visit www.freyafarley.com or call 07856 464054 to find out more.



47. CHARLOTTE ROSE INTERIORS is an online store packed with modern, contemporary, country, bespoke and French style furnishings. If you are looking to re-vamp your home or just update a small room, Charlotte Rose has the answer. Pictured is their lovely 'White Bespoke Dining Table' £599 Visit www.charlotterosehome.com or call 01522 589073 for more information.



48. CAROLINE FOOKS DESIGN has a down-to-earth, flexible and considerate approach to decorating. They also offer a service of styling and room arranging, including photo shoots for private clients and estate agents, adding value to properties. To find out more, visit www.carolinefooksdesign.com or call 020 7386 5772.



49. Since 1967, **DELCOR** has been flying the flag for British craftsmanship with designer made-to-measure sofas and chairs, made entirely in beautiful Northumberland. Every single Delcor sofa and chair is the definition of a masterpiece – that is, a piece handmade by a master craftsmen with over 20 years experience. If you want your chaise longue a little longer or your high back sofa a little lower, a deeper seat or a wider arm, Delcor will make it to your exact specification. Delcor offers a 50 year guarantee on all its pieces. Call 0191 237 1303, or visit www.delcor.co.uk for more information and to find a list of their showrooms.

50. FRAMES BY ERIKA offer beautiful handmade, papercut art that can be made to a bespoke design to match your décor. Have a memorable day or design preserved for a timeless piece. Treat yourself this Christmas, contact Erika for more information by visiting www.frames-by-erika.co.uk or call 07976 714335.



51. MELLOW DUCK offers quirky pouffes which can also be used as bed-ends, footstools and side-tables, all made by their family business in Yorkshire. Choose from several designs and fabrics to create your own piece – customers have given them the highest possible rating on Houzz. Call Helen on 0113 290 7942 to discuss or visit www.mellowduck.co.uk for more information.



52. HEAVENLY METAL offers vintage industrial furniture, restoration, lighting and unique accessories. Loft style living for today! To find out more, call Natalie on 07914 201213 or visit www.heavenlymetal.co.uk



53. ALEXANDER & PEARL's online boutique offers a range of industrial chic and modern furniture and lighting. Whether you are looking for a statement piece or stunning lights to illuminate your home, they have pieces to suit stylish tastes. Pictured is the fabulous Carlotta Decorative French Gold mirror. Visit www.alexanderandpearl.co.uk email mail@alexanderandpearl.co.uk or call 020 8508 0411 for more information.

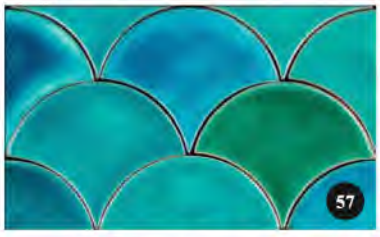


54. INDIGO ANTIQUES specialise in Eastern antique furniture and decorative arts from India, China, Japan and Tibet. For over 35 years they have been carefully selecting furniture, gifts and accessories for their wonderful showroom in Wiltshire. You can now purchase items through their online shop at www.indigo-uk.com Visit the showroom at Dairy Barn, Manningford Bruce, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6JW or call 01672 564722. Pictured is an Indian hand carved, Mughal style single marble lamp niche.





55. JASMINE SILK. A high thread count is not necessarily the last word in luxury contemporary linen. If you're mindful of your skin, it's the material you sleep on that matters. Pure mulberry silk pillowcase from Jasmine Silk has all the qualities you'd expect without the harmful toxins. Jasmine Silk's super-soft bedding and accessories are virtually guaranteed to leave your skin crease-free. To view the full collections, visit www.jasminesilk.com or call 01784 465408.



56. CALF HOUSE is the UK supplier of the beautiful Bella Toscana and Bee Collection tableware by Zeller Keramik Manufaktur. Zeller is renowned for its high quality craftsmanship and the moulds are still cast by hand. For more information and to see other exclusive collections, including the Cocks & Hens range, visit www.calfhouse.co.uk or call 01258 454840.



57. THE DOUGLAS WATSON STUDIO offers high quality handmade and hand painted tiles using traditional techniques and a wide range of glazes, colours and styles, from historical and classical sources to original and contemporary designs. Panels and installations, for kitchens, bathrooms and fireplaces, are custom made for each client. For more information, call 01491 629960 or visit www.douglaswatsonstudio.co.uk



58. BALMAIN & BALMAIN are makers of upholstered sofas, chairs, armchairs and stools that specialise in unusual and bespoke pieces. Each piece is handmade to order by craftsmen using the best skills and materials. The sofas and chairs can be seen at their showroom near Hungerford in the Wiltshire Downs or by visiting the website www.balmainandbalmain.com Call Balmain and Balmain on 01672 870414 for more information.



59. Made from the very finest quality wood, **MULTIYORK**'s furniture collections are hand-finished to the highest standard. From stunning dining tables to upholstered dining chairs, stylish storage solutions and occasional tables, Multiyork have chosen pieces that work with their sofas and armchairs to create a beautifully coherent look. To find out more, call 03333 583325 or visit www.multiyork.co.uk

60. PENROSE PRODUCTS produce luxury bedding and soft furnishings using Alpaca fibre. This rare wool produces some of the softest products and gives amazing comfort. The family run business uses sustainably sourced materials to hand make all of their products to the highest quality. For more information, visit www.penroseproducts.co.uk or call 0845 125 7222.



61. SAMARKAND DESIGN sources vintage textiles from around the world to create beautiful and distinctive home accessories. Unique lampshades crafted from exquisite vintage silk sarees and a range of hand block-printed voiles. Call 07973 922943 or visit www.samarkanddesign.com to see the full range. A fully bespoke service is also available.





62. MAZZARO HOME brings to you a wealth of new ideas for your home. From lighting and mirrors, to beds, console tables and tealights, backed up with unparalleled customer service. They look forward to welcoming you to their world. Shown is the Elf Chair in Teal £345, Aria Console table £459 and Tarifa Mirror £355. For more information, visit www.mazzarohome.com or call 03300 240379.



63. SOFAS & STUFF offer an elegant, supremely comfortable collection of very beautiful British handmade sofas, chairs and sofa beds that look far more expensive than their price tag. Traditional hardwood frames and sprung upholstery are guaranteed for life, delivery is 5 weeks and a no-quibble returns policy is reassuring. Be guided through a cornucopia of fabric options with friendly, expert advisers in rural barn showrooms and new city-centre locations. Buy online at www.sofasandstuff.com or call 08081 783211. Shown here is the Matlock Sofa in Varese Schiaparelli Velvet.

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The Room Refresh... Continued



























64. ART REBELLION proudly presents Mini car furniture. Single/double seaters, Mini bars, Mini beds and Mini theatres created by award winning UK artist George Ioannou. For their extensive range of furniture and artworks, visit www.artrebellion.co.uk or call 020 8668 0007 to find out more.

65. OVERMANTELS has been designing exquisite mirrors in England for 30 years, earning a reputation as Britain's foremost mirror specialists. With their innovative TV mirrors, the reflective glass transforms into a TV screen at the touch of a button! Functionality and entertainment in one statement piece mirror. Find out more at www.mirrors.co.uk or call 020 7223 8151.

66. ARTISAN POSTBOXES & SIGNS. Handcrafted from heavy duty cast aluminium by artisans in Northamptonshire. The Rockbox Mailbox has fantastic capacity and can be fully personalised, from £310. Built-into wall and pillar design postboxes and a range of cast signs also available from their foundry. Browse for inspiration and buy online at www.rockartisansigns.co.uk or call 01327 351561 for a brochure.

67. PLAYAHEAD DESIGN make and install a fantastic range of bespoke treehouses. Check out their new website for galleries of the huge number of unique projects they have completed at www.playahead.org.uk call Jerry direct on 07854 084958 or email him at jerry@playahead.org.uk to find out more.

68. ANIMALS IN WIRE. Commission a handmade life-sized wire portrait of your favourite animal, beloved pet or fantastical beast. Made bespoke to your ideas these sturdy, rustproof sculptures are ideal outdoors or inside. Call Barry on 07951 039663 or visit www.animalsinwire.co.uk Still just time for Christmas orders!

69. ROBERT LANGFORD's exciting new range of "in stock" bedside tables are perfect for any scheme. See the full collection on their new "in stock" website. They are proud to be trusted by the world's best designers. To find out more, visit www.robertlangford.co.uk or call 020 7352 1876.

70. Luxury interior brand **AZTARO** offers exquisitely designed soft furnishings inspired by a rich tapestry of historical cultures, ancient artefacts and age-old creative traditions. Find their latest collection of cushions, throws, bedspreads, bed sashes and table linen at www.aztaro.com or call 020 8908 6328 for details.

71. A PLACE IN THE GARDEN presents the new and traditional version of their popular Coach lamp, with prices starting from £185. For more information, call 01403 864866 or visit www.aplaceinthegarden.co.uk

72. HADDONSTONE, the UK's leading manufacturer of fine garden ornaments, has a unique range of Garden Cremation Memorials. Exceptionally crafted, each design includes a bespoke inscription providing a beautiful ornament for a loved one's remains. Priced at £595 including mainland UK delivery. Visit www.haddonstonememorials.com or call 01604 770711.

73. WALLACE SACKS' sumptuously soft, real leather Chesterfield sofa is normally £2,495, but now available with 70% discount at the special price of £749 plus delivery (free delivery on orders over £1000). Quote code HG7DEC15 at checkout for the discount, offer ends 25th January 2016. It comes with a lifetime warranty too. To order, visit www.wallacesacks.com or call 0800 011 4642. See website for details.

74. RIVIERA HOT TUBS offer a unique range of award winning cedar wood hot tubs, combining traditional cooperage methods with the latest spa technology. These hot tubs range from £5,995-£12,000. They install throughout Europe and worldwide. For further information or to request a brochure, visit www.riviera-hottubs.co.uk or call 01803 663709.

75. Designed and handmade in North East London, **MONTI** geometric glassware makes any space stylish. Mix and match shapes and exotic air plants to create your own unique contemporary geometric displays. Find your Monti collection at www.montibymonti.com or call 07748 281196 for more information.

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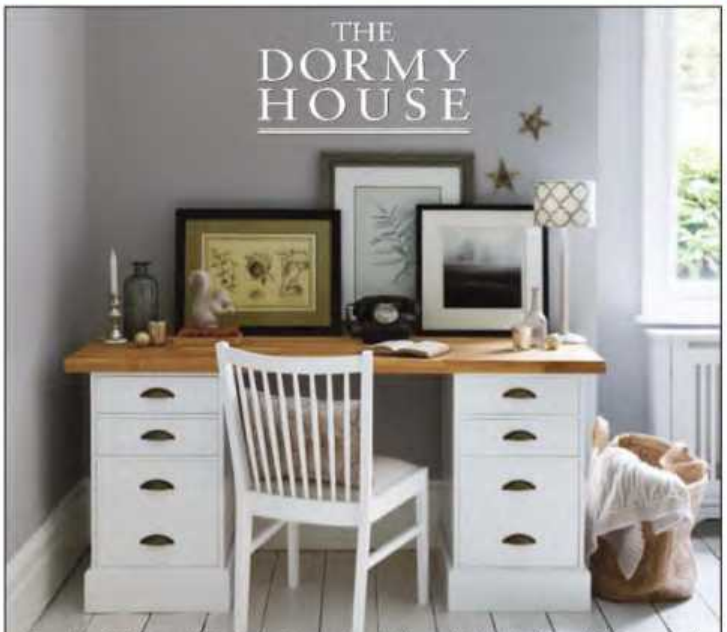


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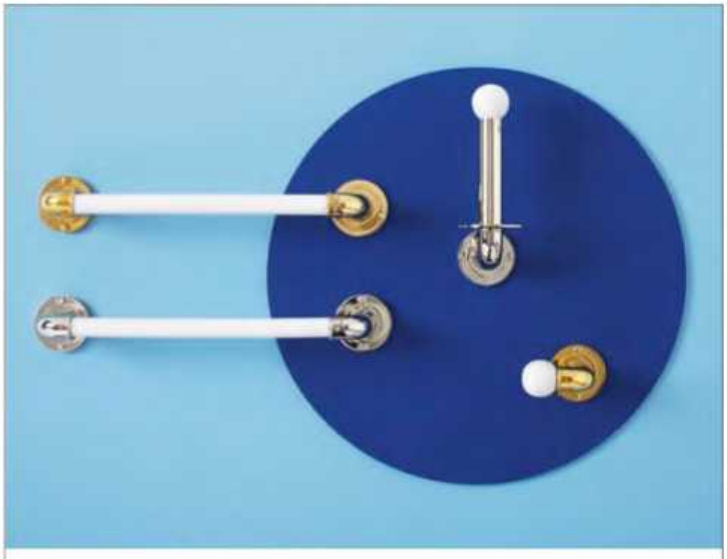
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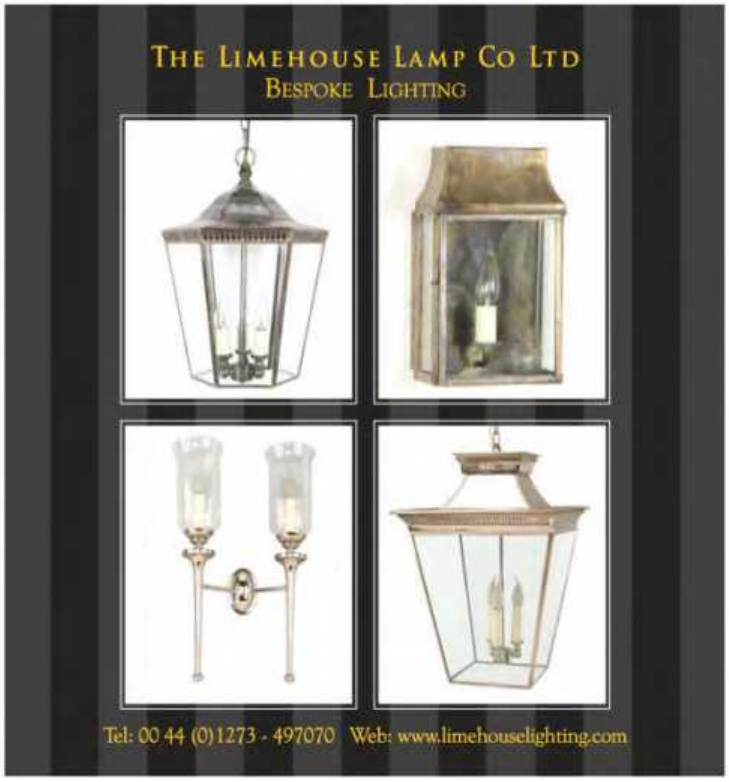
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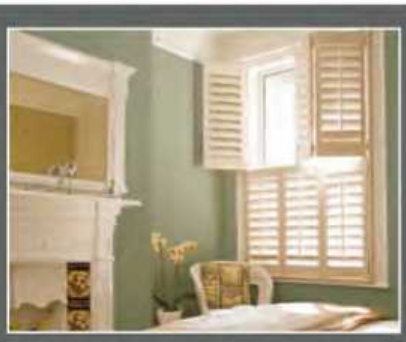

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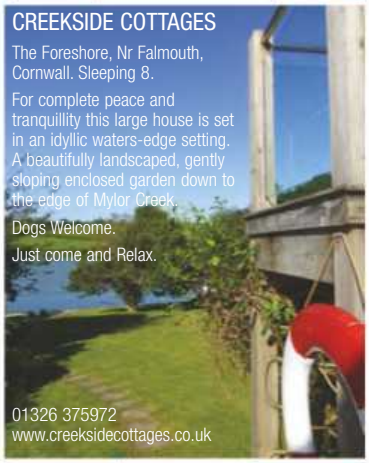
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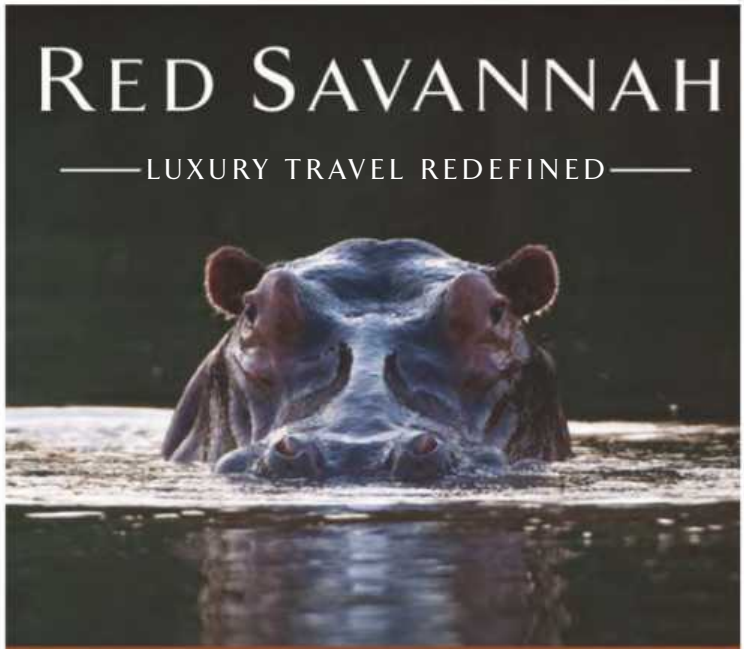
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Family *affair*

For decades, Russell Simpson has sold some of Chelsea's top properties, thanks to its close-knit office that functions – quite literally – as a family

Photography Hugo Burnand Words Rosemary Brooke



FROM LEFT: Leo, Hermione, Alan, Bertie and Jake.

As far as estate agencies go, Russell Simpson is something of an anomaly. For starters, it has no shop-front: instead, the company's office is based in a terraced house just off the King's Road in Chelsea, at the heart of their prime central London market. Then, there's its size: despite its consistent success over the past 36 years, founder Alan Russell has deliberately ensured that the company has remained small and personable – although in recent years, the close-knit team has expanded to include four of Alan's six children.

'Clients tend to return to us as we're all very involved with the business – they end up knowing us as a family,' says Bertie, Alan's eldest son, who joined Russell Simpson in 2008. 'There's always a senior member of the team here – if someone calls the office, they'll always get through to someone who knows what's going on.'

Two of Alan's other sons, Jake and Leo, also joined the business after university, in 2009 and 2012 respectively. Their sister Hermione took a course at the Inchbald School of design, making her the in-house interiors expert – and Mandarin speaker.

Aside from Hermione's interiors experience, all of the Russells received their industry training on the job, instead of taking a course. It's an approach that worked for Alan when he started out selling houses in the 1970s, and he's passed it on to his own children. 'I had no training – I was thrown in with a car, a telephone and a desk and told to get on with it,' he says. 'If I didn't sell anything in six months, I was told I would be out. I've tried to do the same thing with my kids – I threw them all in at the deep end.'

It was a successful tactic. Since the next generation came on board, they have brought a number of clever strategies to the business, including making the most of social media. Both Twitter and Instagram has proved useful tools and have followers numbering in the thousands. 'It's amazing,' says Bertie. 'I've had four viewings in the last two weeks through an image I've posted on Instagram.'

The company was an early adopter of the digital revolution. 'We've never had a shop-front – I had a lot of criticism about that until the internet came along,' says Alan. 'I feel that it works much better this way. We've had to give a very good service, and we are discreet. I've had a couple of approaches from people wanting to buy the company but I've always said no.'

It's clear that the family is passionate about their business, making it their way of life rather than simply a job. 'Your name's on the door – if we got any negative publicity, we would take it very personally,' says Jake. 'You've got to provide a good service. It's a small industry at this level, so news spreads like wildfire. A lot of people want a quick buck, so go into it for a year or two, but we're thinking about the next forty years. The amount of people who come back after 35 years to buy or sell a house is extraordinary.'

'People return to Russell Simpson because they trust us and have worked with us before,' says Leo. 'Being a close knit family company, every phone call and instruction, from the smallest enquiry to the largest sale, is handled with meticulous care and attention, offering a personal and considered service.'





FROM TOP: Some of London's most desirable properties are sold through Russell Simpson

'Being a close knit family company, every phone call and instruction, from the smallest enquiry to the largest sale, is handled with meticulous care and attention, offering a personal and considered service.'

It isn't surprising that they're so committed: all six children grew up immersed in the business, and Leo was practically born in the office. 'My wife Jane was working one Friday and went into labour unexpectedly,' Alan recalls. 'She got to the Portland in time, but was back in the office after the weekend with Leo under the desk.' It was Jane who helped to set up the profitable rental business, which kept the company going in the difficult climate during 1989, and still forms a valuable part of the company today. Things have changed a lot since the 1980s: 'For me, the most dramatic change has been having the children working here, they've really added a lot to the business,' says Alan. Every member of the Russell Simpson team is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the company, not just the family members. Still, Alan's got high hopes that his two remaining sons will be the next new recruits – March is currently a student at Leeds, while Noah has just finished school and is working in the office until December this year – so Russell Simpson looks set to stay very much in the family.

Russell Simpson: 020 7225 0277; www.russellsimpson.co.uk







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David Forbes set up The Private Office in 2008 to provide discreet access to Savills comprehensive range of expertise via a boutique-scale, highly personalised service; and to forge contacts between high-end clients and the world's most prominent wealth advisers, developers and financial institutions. 'We have cultivated the most influential intermediaries in all sectors of real estate,' he says, 'so we can present property opportunities to the most discerning global audience.'

Whatever your real estate request, Savills Private Office can accommodate it with guaranteed discretion and privacy and their ever-growing client base is testament to the success of the department.



While David forges the links that match clients with opportunities in the top echelons of London and international real estate, Crispin Holborow and Ned Baring provide the transactional expertise in their respective specialisms.

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He continues to strengthen trusting relationships with many of London's key investors and significant international agencies and plays a key role in the marketing of Prime Central London developments in the Far East, Russia and the Middle East where he travels frequently.

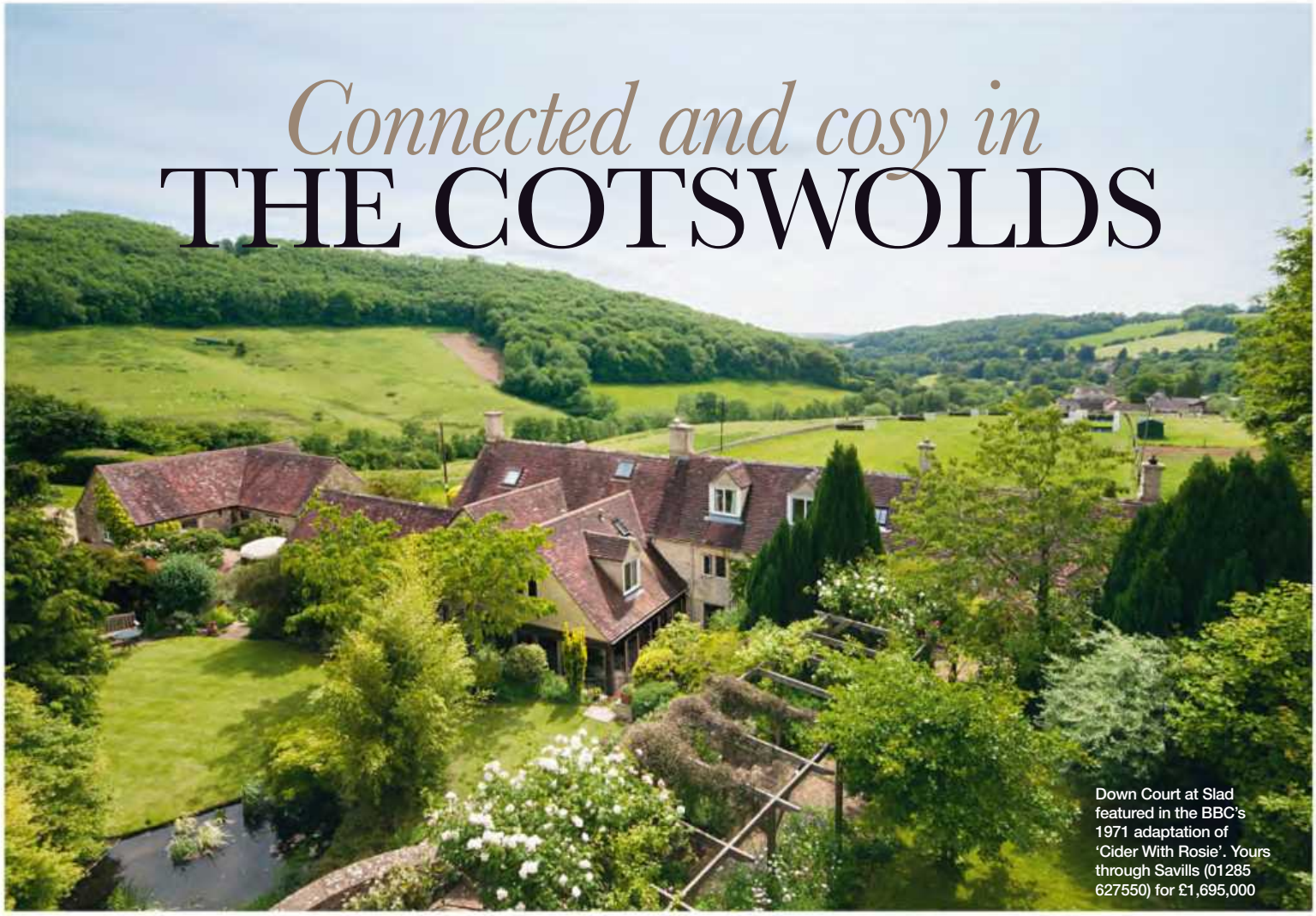
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Connected and cosy in THE COTSWOLDS



Down Court at Slad featured in the BBC's 1971 adaptation of 'Cider With Rosie'. Yours through Savills (01285 627550) for £1,695,000

Glorious countryside, copious wildlife and royal residents aside, the Cotswolds is probably best known for its current celebrity count. *Claire Pilton* reports

The Cotswolds is the largest and most famous of all the 38 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales. It embraces some 787 square miles, of which the lion's share is in Gloucestershire. For those who aspire to a home in the most connected county in the country; who wish to be within 90 minutes of London and a brisk walk from a cracking local boozer, there is a residence to suit every starlet and lottery winner from bolt-hole cottages to full-blown mansions. However, you must be aware that property prices in the prime Cotswolds area can, according to Knight Frank, command premiums of up to 60%.



JUST DANDY

Having changed all the rooms and given them a magnolia makeover, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen has re-launched his Grade II-listed six-bedroom property with a new brochure and price tag. The 17th-century manor house can be found one mile from Cirencester at Siddington and features gorgeous walled gardens, a useful garage block and studio flat above; Strutt & Parker (01285 653101) is seeking £1.5 million.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Set at the heart of Woolstone close to the village pub, this extraordinary home has been owned by the same family for 55 years. Comprising a thatched cottage, a four-storey brick tower and what served as the village shop many moons ago – all inter-connecting – it costs £795,000 and, according to Butler Sherborne (01235 244890), requires "thought love and care" to modernise the higgledy-piggledy four-bedroom accommodation. If you can't wait, the same amount will also secure a newly renovated four-bedroom house at Ampney St Mary through Jackson-Stops & Staff (01993 822661].



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Developed five years ago, Barnsley Hill Farm epitomises the height of energy-efficient eco-living. It's almost completely carbon neutral and uses just 10 per cent of the energy needed to run a normal house. There are five bedrooms, a huge indoor-leisure complex and 11.5 acres of gardens and parkland – as well as some of the finest views in the Cotswolds. Priced at over £5 million through Knight Frank (01285 659771).



TEXTBOOK COUNTRYSIDE

Oft visited by Laurie Lee and surrounded by countryside made famous by *Cider with Rosie*, the five-bedroom Down Court is a delightful walk from the village of Slad. It comes with a one-bedroom annex, lots of garage space, a club-sized tennis court and pavilion, as well as landscaped gardens of about an acre with an ornamental pond and stream. All yours through Savills (01285 627550) for £1,695,000.



PHOTOGRAPHY:MEL YATES



Kate Moss strikes a pose at her interior-design project

MODEL BEHAVIOUR

The Queen of the Cotswolds has made her designer debut at The Lakes (01367 250066) near Lechlade. Set in Yoo's 650-acre second-homes estate, The Barnhouse, with interiors by Kate Moss, has five bedrooms, a pool and private woodland. At £2.5 million it's "a perfect place to escape with family and friends", says Ms Moss from her country seat at Little Faringdon.



IN THE BAG

Formerly a public house and rifle-range, The Riflemans is a five-bedroom house that affords views across pastureland to Swift's Hill and is a short walk from The Woolpack at Slad village, two miles from Stroud. Dating from the 17th century and Grade II listed, it has been lovingly refurbished by handbag and accessories designer Lulu Guinness, who is asking £765,000 through Hamptons (01452 595249).

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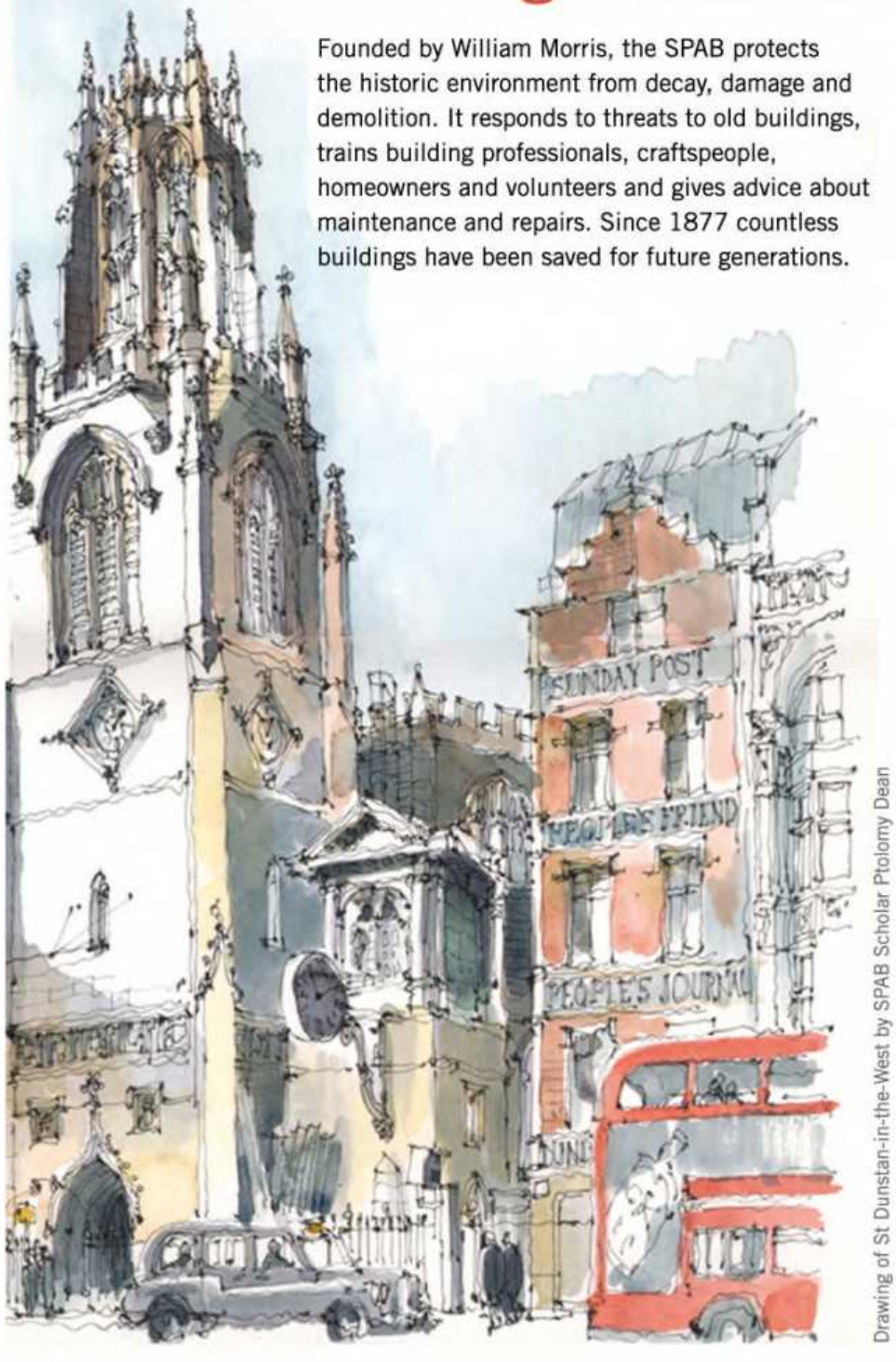
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All I want for CHRISTMAS

Claire Pilton asks six London agents to pick a property that fulfills their wish list

KEYS TO *A duplex penthouse at Cheyne Court, Chelsea, SW3*

- ACCOMMODATION: (3,059sq ft) Five bedrooms, four bathrooms, three reception rooms
- OUTSIDE: Roof terrace
- VIEWS: Overlooking Chelsea Physic Garden
- SERVICES: 24-hour security, porterage
- GUIDE PRICE: £8.5 million (share of freehold)

Alan Russell, founder of Russell Simpson (020 7225 0277), says, "This fashionable and recently refurbished New York-style loft would be the best Christmas present for any young couple. Finished in untreated oak timber throughout and featuring contemporary wood-burning fires, it offers space, comfort and plenty of wine storage for the festive period."



KEYS TO *A brand-new apartment at London Dock, E1*

- ACCOMMODATION: (2,138 sq ft) Three bedrooms and bathrooms, large open-plan living/dining room/kitchen
- OUTSIDE: 1,344sq ft roof terrace, balcony
- FACILITIES: Residents' Club with lounge and screening room; 20m pool, gym, squash court, virtual golf suite; 24-hour concierge
- GUIDE PRICE: £3,499,950 (for a 973-year leasehold)
- READY FOR OCCUPATION: Autumn 2017

Mark Collins, Chairman of Residential at CBRE (020 7182 2477), says, "We are witnessing a strong appetite for new-build homes in Tower Hamlets, with all 1,433 new homes completed within the past year already sold, and 80% of the homes under construction purchased off-plan. Buyers will need to act fast to secure this premier apartment on the 10th floor of the Admiral Wharf tower in this popular St George development. The generous terrace offers views to the north, south and west, and one of the best views of the City I've seen from a London residence."



KEYS TO *A maisonette in Wimpole Street, W1*

- ACCOMMODATION: (3,992 sq ft) Four bedrooms and bathrooms, three reception rooms, roof-top sunroom with a kitchenette
- OUTSIDE: Three balconies and a terrace (totalling 749 sq ft)
- GUIDE PRICE: £10.95 million (share of freehold)

Claire Reynolds, head of Savills Marylebone (020 3527 0400), says, "Situated in a beautiful Grade II-listed building, this stunning maisonette showcases Georgian architecture at its finest, with high ceilings and period features. Renovated with a contemporary twist, it feels like a house but starts from the first floor and is accessed via a private lift. Unusually for Marylebone, it has an incredibly secluded roof terrace that provides a fabulous alfresco entertaining space for summer BBQs… and Christmas drinks." ➤



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KEYS TO *A low-built villa on Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill, W11*

- ACCOMMODATION: (4,472 sq ft) Five bedrooms, four bathrooms, five reception rooms
- OUTSIDE: Private garden with direct access to one of the area's famous communal gardens; off-street parking
- GUIDE PRICE: £11.75 million freehold

Caroline Foord, partner at Knight Frank (020 7229 0229), says, "A homely country house in the heart of London, this villa offers impressive proportions and traditional decor. I can definitely imagine hosting Christmas here, singing carols in the huge drawing room, hanging stockings from the grand fireplace and decorating a wonderful tree in the entrance hall. Entertaining aside, it is the access to the idyllic communal garden that pushes this to the top of my wish list."



KEYS TO *A family house on Edis Street, Primrose Village, NW1*

- ACCOMMODATION: (1,924 sq ft) Five bedrooms, two bathrooms, two reception rooms and a study
- OUTSIDE: Courtyard garden, terrace and roof terrace
- GUIDE PRICE: £2,950,000 (freehold)

Hamish Gilfeather, associate director of John D Wood (020 7586 9060), says: "This Victorian terrace house has been configured to provide generous open-plan living space for a large family. I have four children, three cats and a dog, so this naturally light and high-ceilinged property would do nicely. It's also just a few minutes from our office on Regent's Park Road and a short walk from Primrose Hill and Regent's Park where the children and dog could have a good run!"







KEYS TO *A lateral apartment on Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, SW7*

- ACCOMMODATION: (4,570 sq ft) Five bedrooms, four bathrooms, three reception rooms
- OUTSIDE: Communal garden/ terrace
- SERVICES: 24-hour porterage, security and underground parking
- GUIDE PRICE: £12.7 million (for a 964-year leasehold)

Shirley Humphrey, director at Harrods Estates (020 7225 6506), says, "With more than 4,570 sq ft of spacious lateral living that includes a generous reception and dining room, this apartment is ideal for entertaining family and friends at Christmas time. I always get media-room envy, how lovely to be able to watch your favourite films or the Queen's speech in your very own cinema! The location is right in the heart of South Kensington, with its array of shops and boutiques along with my favourite London museum, the Victoria & Albert, just moments away."



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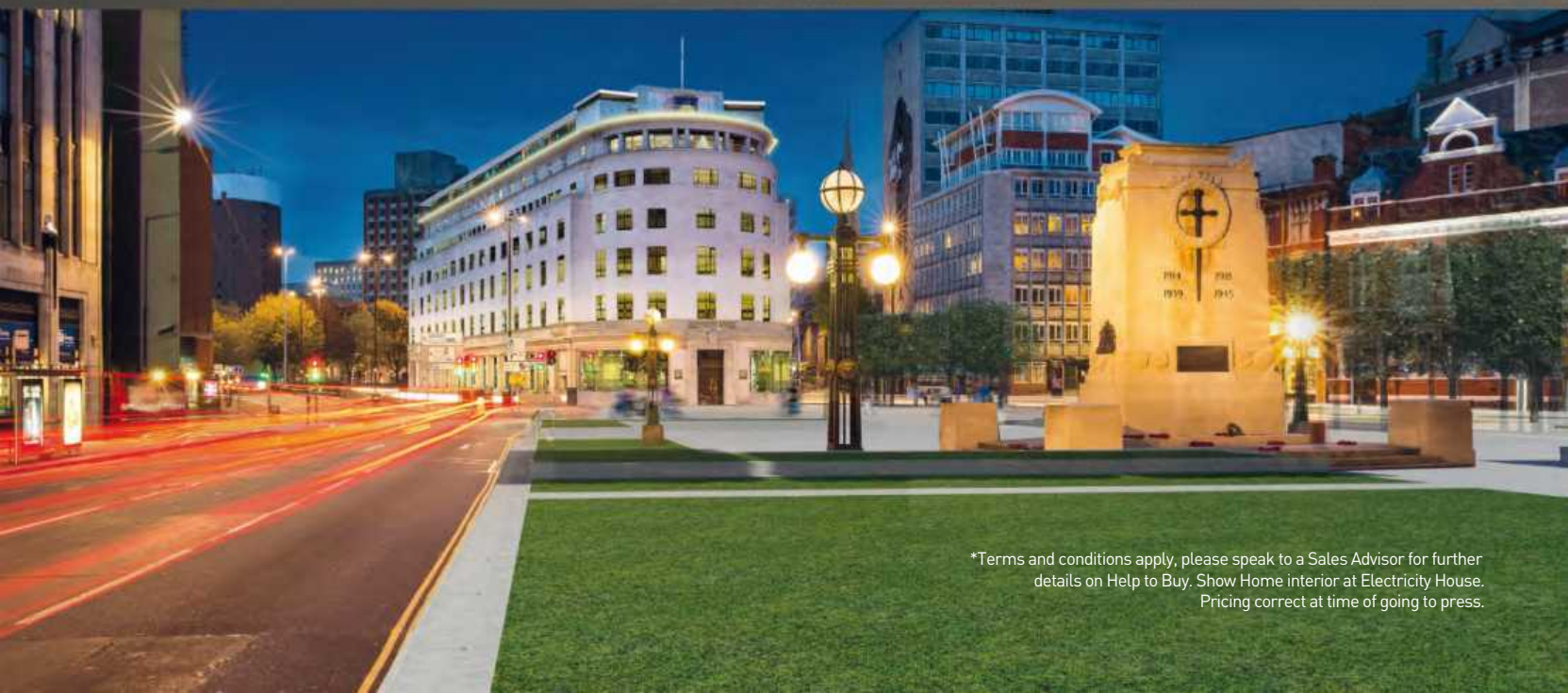
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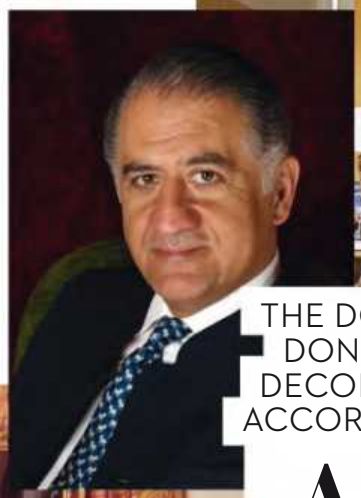
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THE DOS AND DON'TS OF DECORATING, ACCORDING TO

Alidad

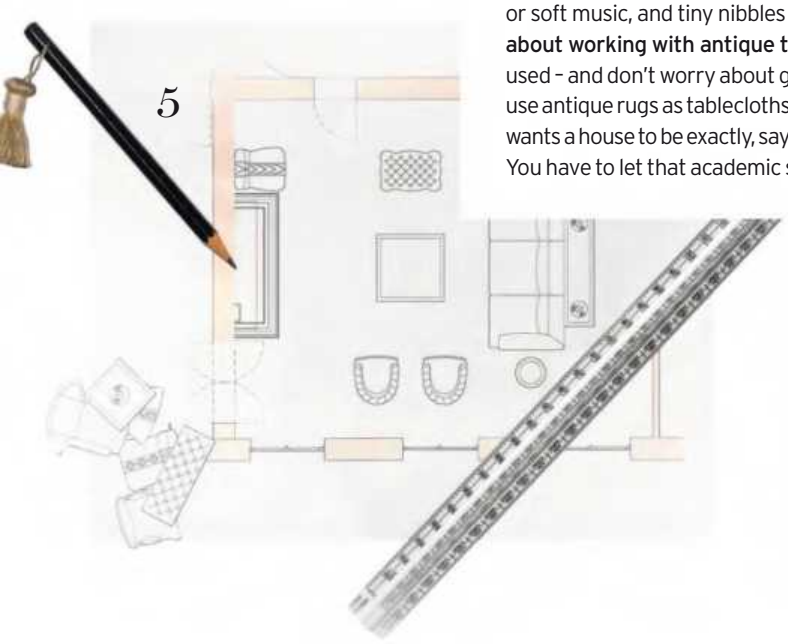
The former specialist in Islamic art and textiles at Sotheby's is known for designing richly ornate yet comfortable interiors

Try to imagine the female line of your family, for several generations, living in your house. Perhaps the dining table was moved up into the study a generation ago, or maybe there is still a room with your grandparents' wallpaper. This kind of historical play-acting can help to create rooms with a sense of history and imagination. (1) • **Don't be afraid to experiment with surface textures and finishes.** Mix them to make a scheme, just as you would with fabrics. (2) • **A big mistake is when rooms are created to be seen and not used.** You need somewhere to put your cup of tea and good light to read by. • **Britain is the best country in the world**, except for one thing: the weather. Use chenilles, velvets and textured fabrics to create warm, protective rooms. (3) • **Cover the main, large surfaces in your rooms in plain fabrics**, then use cushions, rugs and ceramics to add pattern. This way, it is easy to control the proportions. (4) • **Being detail-obsessed is no use if you can't 'zoom out'.** You need to be able to see the overall effect of the interiors decisions you are making. • **Do a furniture floor plan before anything else.** Use a scale ruler and cut little squares of paper to represent the chairs and sofa. The plug sockets will be in the right places, and there are no awkward fits. (5) • **Consider all five senses.** The eye is first, but touch confirms that, yes, this sofa is a wonderful chenille, and from there you can introduce scents or soft music, and tiny nibbles placed about the room. • **Don't be nervous about working with antique textiles** – these things were supposed to be used – and don't worry about getting the period or context correct. I like to use antique rugs as tablecloths. (6) • **Houses are not museums.** If someone wants a house to be exactly, say, 1750s, that project will not give me pleasure. You have to let that academic stuff go. *alidad.com* □

> Being detail-obsessed is no use if you can't 'zoom out' and see the overall effect of the decisions you make







1 A drawing room in Beirut, designed by Alidad, reflects the owners' family history. **2** Alidad has combined a variety of textures to beautiful effect in this London bathroom. **3** Red fabrics create a warm feeling in this bedroom. **4** Alidad's own drawing room is a lesson in balancing patterns with plains. **5** An example of the type of floor plan the designer uses. **6** Alidad has repurposed an antique rug as a tablecloth in this London hallway

AS TOLD TO RUTH SLEIGHTHOLME. JAMES McDONALD; PIXELATE; SIMON UPTON



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to *House & Garden*'s new annual travel supplement, *Destinations,* in association with the Qatar Tourism Authority. If it's dropped into your lap at just that time of year when you are dreaming of warmer climes or mapping out your travels for 2016, we're confident you'll find all the inspiration you need right here – starting with those sunnier spots. We've picked the brains of travel experts to reveal what's new in our favourite fly-and-flop destinations, while one writer hops on board a new expedition ship to the Galápagos. If ski rather than sun is your winter ritual, how about considering Japan, where deep powder and fresh seafood are the order of the day? More cultural adventures come in the form of a journey through Yunnan, while restaurant critic Fay Maschler tastes her way around Rajasthan. Our travel calendar offers a wealth of ideas for the next 12 months, and, lastly, don't miss your chance to win a luxury trip to the Great Barrier Reef – one of our top destinations for 2016.

Kate

CONTRIBUTORS



PAMELA GOODMAN *House & Garden*'s travel editor of 23 years shares her expertise with *Destinations*, giving her thoughts on how we travel to gather experiences (p31); on Mozambique, one of our top spots for 2016 (p77), and on what's new in African safaris (p78).
On Pammy's bucket list for 2016 Ethiopia and New Zealand – 'New Zealand has topped my list for as long as I can remember. 2016 may not be the year I pull it off, but I'll keep dreaming.'



CHRIS CALDICOTT As Expedition Photographer-in-Residence to the Royal Geographical Society, Chris travelled to some of the most wild and inaccessible places on earth. Now an author, lecturer and photographer, Chris made his first trip to the Galápagos for *Destinations* (p52).
On Chris's bucket list for 2016 The tropical islands of southern Japan, the Mangoky River in Madagascar and Borobudur in Java.



FAY MASCHLER MBE Born in a Himalayan hill station, Fay grew up in Britain and the USA. Initially a copywriter at JWT London, she moved to the *Radio Times* and then to the *Evening Standard* where she has been restaurant critic for the past 43 years. Fay returned to India for *Destinations* to rediscover, and share, the culinary gems of Rajasthan (p67).
On Fay's bucket list for 2016 Trieste, Vancouver, Japan and the Stockholm Archipelago.



SYBIL KAPOOR An award-winning food and cookery writer, Sybil fell in love with travel writing when *House & Garden* sent her on an epicurean adventure to Denmark in 2009. Since then Sybil has used it as an excuse to travel (and eat) her way around the world. For *Destinations*, Sybil journeys to the mountains of Yunnan, China (p70).
On Sybil's bucket list for 2016 The Dazu Rock carvings in Sichuan, China and the Al Hajar mountains, Oman.

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JOHN LAURIE



Mauritius

From trekking in Black River Gorges national park, to cycling in the mountains or kite-surfing in the south west in the shadow of Le Morne (pictured), Mauritius is not just flop and drop. 'There is so much more to do,' says Mauritius expert Susie Freeman, of Susie Freeman Travel. 'Quite a few hotels offer complimentary golf and all offer inclusive water sports.' With cleaned-up roads and new motorways (and driving on the left), it is easier than ever to explore this multifaceted island.

Among Mauritius's legendary hotels, the chatter this winter is about Le Touessrok Spa & Resort, which has been revamped by Shangri-La. As well as many active options (wakeboarding, sailing, parasailing), it offers guided horse riding by night through the forests for a more sedate encounter with the natural surroundings.

WHEN TO GO Mauritius is a year-round destination, but high season is October to April. The winter season (May to August) is reflected in the prices. At this time, the west coast is lovely as the sea is still warm and it is sheltered from the south-east trade winds.

ANTON PETRUS/GETTY IMAGES

Southern Sri Lanka

Beyond the beaches, 2016 is the year to see Sri Lanka through fresh eyes, be that by hiking in the Knuckles range north of Kandy, boogie boarding or surfing off the southern tip (pictured) or doing tree-top yoga in the new Tri eco resort beside Koggala Lake. Travel throughout the country has become quicker and easier thanks to an expanded network from privately owned 'air taxi' service Cinnamon Air.

Stretching along the south-east coast, Kumana National Park has all the wildlife and drama of Yala, without the crowds. Leopard sightings are close-up and lingering; birdlife is prolific. Specialist tour operator Ampersand Travel has launched a secret mobile safari within the park, including fly-camps on beaches and riversides. Ampersand's founder James Jayasundera recommends visiting off season. 'People think rain is bad but, in the tropics, the rain is warm, dramatic and short-lived. To swim in the sea when it's raining, when the sea is like a warm bath, is a euphoric experience.' A new way to discover Sri Lanka indeed.

WHEN TO GO Peak season is December to April but another great time to visit is August and September when the island is at its best and there are no monsoons; prices also fall in September.

TOM PARKER

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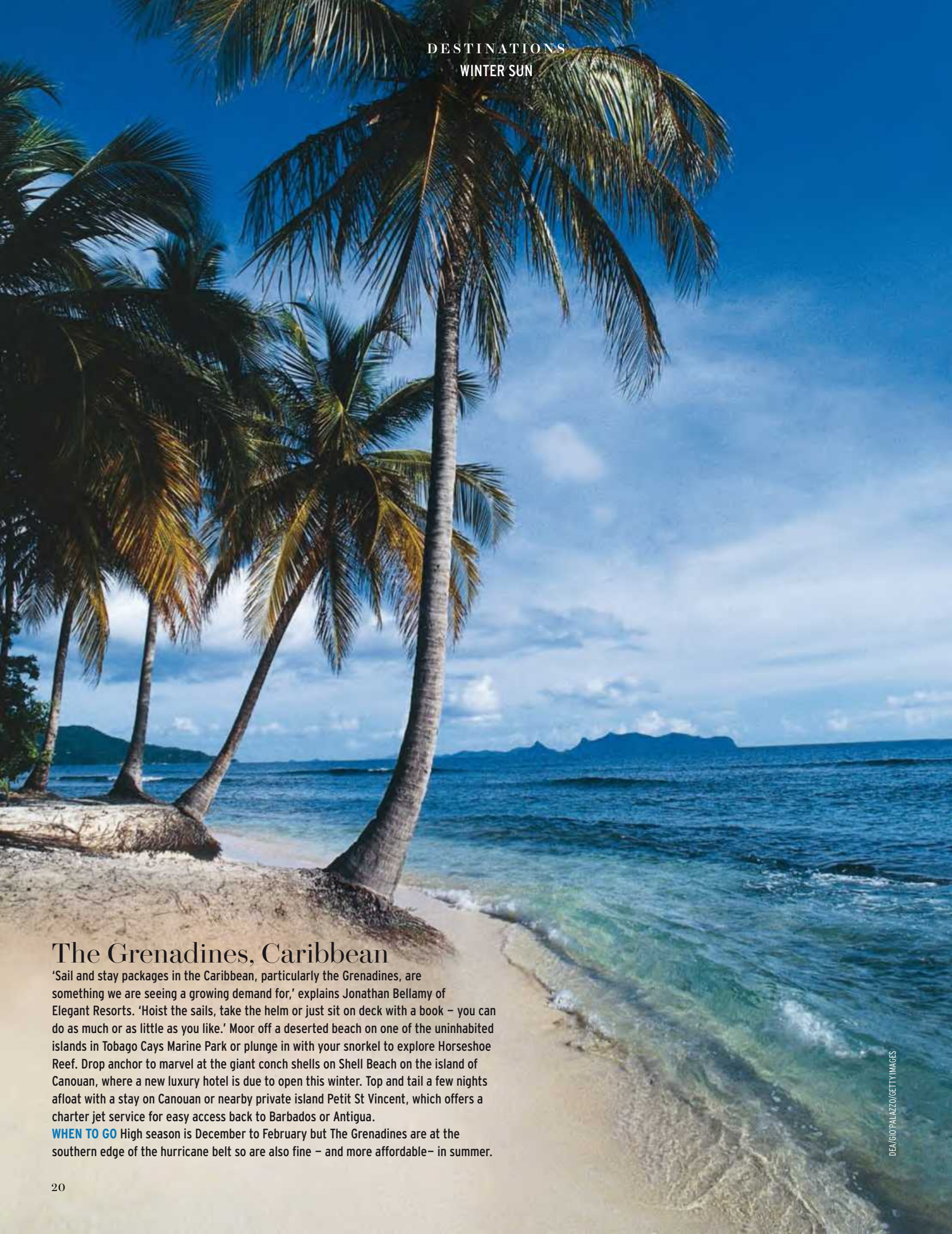


SAKIS PAPADOPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

Maldives

Take the family! That's the message from the Maldives in 2016. 'Islands are investing heavily in their kids' clubs and in activities that allow families to spend quality time together,' says Vanessa Dean from Carrier. Children will be enchanted by the Lha Velaa ('mini turtle') kids' club on Velaa Private Island in the northern Noonu Atoll, which is designed as a waterpark. At Niyama in the south-west Dhaalu Atoll, the kids' club on their 48-villa 'Play' island accepts children from 12 months old – the only resort in the Maldives to do so. Even iconic honeymoon resorts are in the family way, with large, new water villas on Conrad Rangali's family-orientated island Rangalifinolhu, and The Den, a new kids' club at Soneva Fushi, complete with cinema and mocktail bar. Also in the Unesco biosphere reserve Baa Atoll (pictured), the three- and four-bedroom 'homes' at newly opened Amilla Fushi are perfect for multigenerational families.

WHEN TO GO December to April is high season, when it's dry and warm and with calm seas. The rest of the year is wetter and more humid, but prices are up to 40 per cent lower.



The Grenadines, Caribbean

'Sail and stay packages in the Caribbean, particularly the Grenadines, are something we are seeing a growing demand for,' explains Jonathan Bellamy of Elegant Resorts. 'Hoist the sails, take the helm or just sit on deck with a book – you can do as much or as little as you like.' Moor off a deserted beach on one of the uninhabited islands in Tobago Cays Marine Park or plunge in with your snorkel to explore Horseshoe Reef. Drop anchor to marvel at the giant conch shells on Shell Beach on the island of Canouan, where a new luxury hotel is due to open this winter. Top and tail a few nights afloat with a stay on Canouan or nearby private island Petit St Vincent, which offers a charter jet service for easy access back to Barbados or Antigua.

WHEN TO GO High season is December to February but The Grenadines are at the southern edge of the hurricane belt so are also fine – and more affordable– in summer.

DEA/GIO PALAZZO/GETTY IMAGES



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KEVIN SCHAFER/CORBIS

Lord Howe Island, Australia

All eyes will be trained on Queensland this winter as Sir David Attenborough unveils his new three-part close-up encounter with the Great Barrier Reef on the BBC. But further down the Australian coast, 370 miles off New South Wales, Lord Howe Island delivers a quintessential reef and rainforest experience during those months of the year when travel to the Reef can be wet and humid. Off the radar but eminently accessible, Lord Howe Island receives daily flights, year-round, from Sydney. 'It's an incredible natural environment – like a mini Bora Bora,' says Rachel Gleave of Turquoise Holidays. 'The reef is outstanding as are the hiking and cycling trails – Lord Howe has it all.' And that includes the perfect place to stay: the nine-suite luxury Capella Lodge, from the family who created Kangaroo Island's acclaimed Southern Ocean Lodge.

WHEN TO GO November until the end of March.



Indonesia

'Throughout Indonesia, Bali is still the best place for luxury accommodation, dining and quality of service,' says Mike Taylor of ITC Luxury Travel. 'But there is a growing trend for people looking to explore more, on Bali and beyond. We have received requests for places such as Menjangan island off the north-west coast of Bali and the Gili islands off Lombok.' Tapping into this trend are an increasing number of traditional-style *phinisi* sailing ships that have been newly built and luxuriously kitted out to allow access to remote parts of the archipelago without the need to forgo comfort. Best booked as one element in a longer itinerary, the newest of these was launched by Amanwana resort on Moyo Island east of Bali in June. Christened *Amandira*, the 38-metre, two-mast coastal cruiser hosts up to 10 guests for five- and seven-night adventures in Komodo National Park from April to September and around the Raja Ampat islands (pictured), from October to March.
WHEN TO GO December to April is high season, when it's dry and warm and with calm seas. The rest of the year is wetter and more humid, but prices are up to 40 per cent lower.

ETHAN DANIELS/GETTY IMAGES







Angsana Velavaru's InOcean villas seen from the sea-plane approach. TOP RIGHT Funa Restaurant. RIGHT Exploring by kayak

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The action centres on the beautiful blue lagoon at the resort's centre, on one side of which is the main island, with its 79 beach-front private villas, and on the other, 34 InOcean villas – the first stand-alone collection of water villas in the Maldives. The lagoon between is a playground for water games such as Waboba, a new take on Frisbee played in waist-high water, water polo and aqua volleyball. There are sports including windsurfing, wakeboarding, knee-boarding and mono-skiing for those seeking an adrenaline rush, or more tranquil marine explorations in a glass-bottom canoe. With its proximity to vibrant dive sites, Angsana Velavaru is the ideal location for experienced and novice divers to get up close to whale sharks, manta rays, white-tip reef sharks, eagle rays and, of course, turtles. Meanwhile, children aged eight and upwards can experience diving in the shallow lagoon with the child-friendly 'Bubble Maker' gear.

Cooking lessons and cocktail classes, conservation projects, sunrise picnics, yoga and indulgent treatments in the award-winning Angsana Spa provide downtime of a different kind. And, lastly, let's not forget Angsana Velavaru's immaculate white-sand beach – the perfect place to cast away your cares doing absolutely nothing at all.

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The Royal Palm's quiet location on Grand Sable Beach. BELOW, FROM LEFT All suites and rooms overlook the gardens and Indian Ocean beyond. One of three heated pools. La Goélette on the waterside is one of three fine places to dine







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Located on Grand Sable Beach, on Mauritius's north coast, a short walk from Grand Baie, The Royal Palm has an old-world charm, with just 69 immaculate suites, all of which overlook verdant gardens and ocean beyond. The hotel's 1,000-square-foot Spa by Clarins is an oasis of efficacious treatments and calm.

The Royal Palm is long established as one of the finest dining experiences on Mauritius, with a choice of three restaurants – La Goélette, La Brezza and Le Bar Plage – overseen by executive chef Michel de Matteis. Their menus present the very best that Mauritius has to offer – just like the *grande dame* hotel herself.

READER OFFER

Book at least 30 days before travel and enjoy a superb 20 per cent off accommodation at The Royal Palm. Seven nights in a Junior Suite on a bed and breakfast basis, including flights with British Airways and hotel transfers, costs from £3,220pp, sharing.



THE EXPERT VIEW

Susie Freeman is an independent tour operator and one of the best-known on Mauritius. Every property represented by Susie (pictured), including The Royal Palm, has been thoroughly inspected and her team makes it a priority to know the management personally. The Royal Palm is one of Mauritius's finest hotels,' says Susie. 'It's sophisticated, elegant and on one of the island's best swimming beaches.'

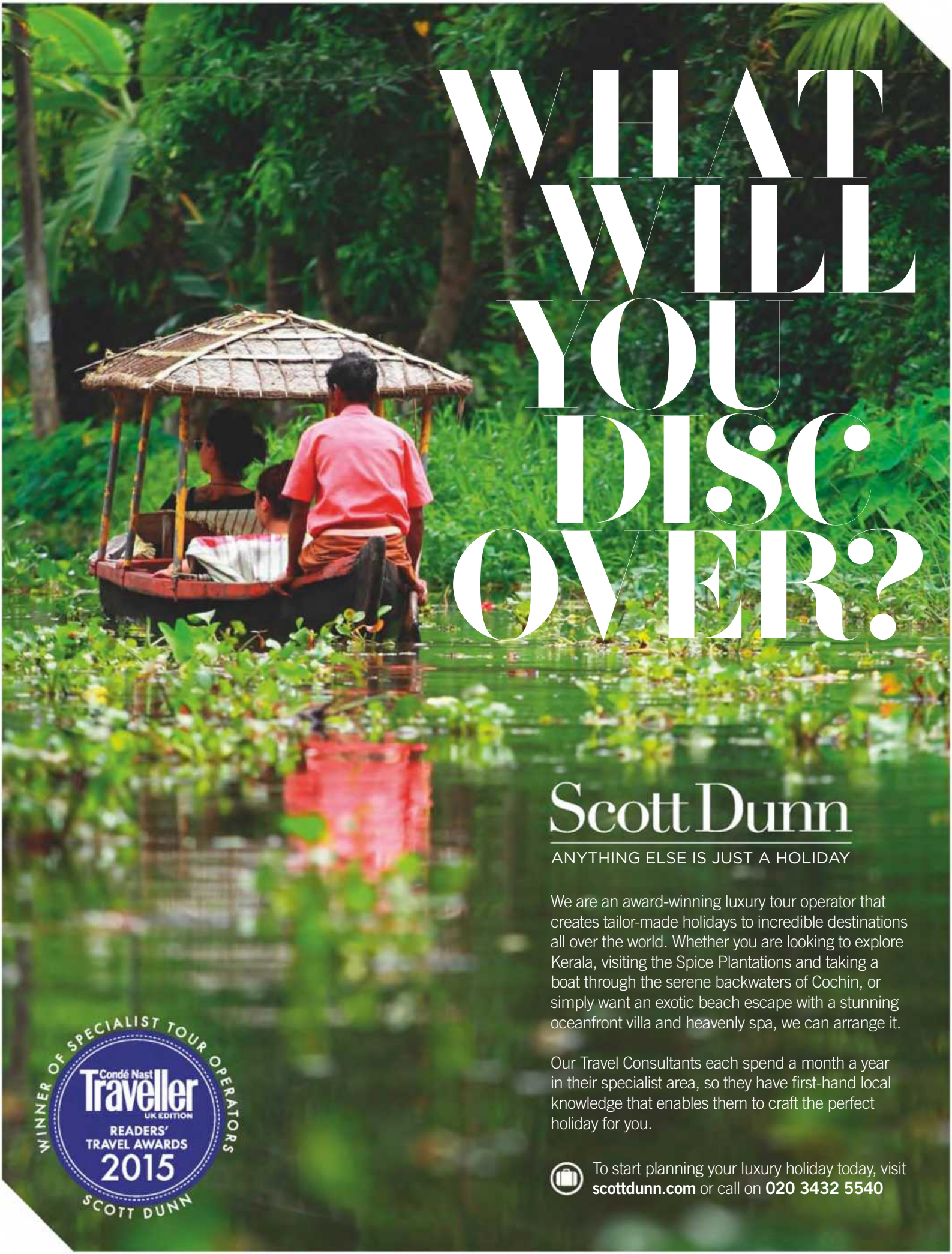
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COSTA RICA

New direct flights from the UK in May put the world's most remarkable wildlife destination within reach



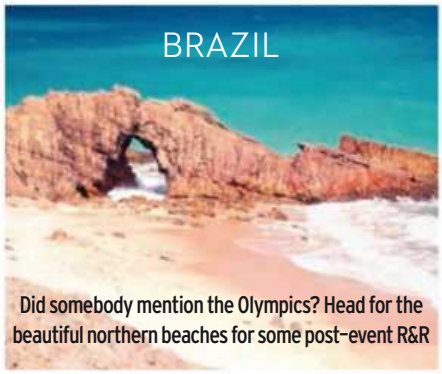
ZIMBABWE

With a new international airport and new lodges, one of Africa's best safari destinations is back on the map



MOZAMBIQUE COAST

The marvellous lodges that dot Mozambique's coast and islands are reward for tackling the tricky access



BRAZIL

Did somebody mention the Olympics? Head for the beautiful northern beaches for some post-event R&R



ITALY

The country we never tire of – but we're heading off the tourist trail, from the Conero Riviera to Matera



SOUTH-WEST CHINA

Coo at pandas in Chengdu then make for Yunnan for a heady mix of cultures and soaring vistas



NORTHERN INDIA

For a first visit, it has to be Rajasthan; for second-timers, Uttar Pradesh's new Heritage Arc beckons



NEVIS

The Caribbean's laid-back gem; plant a palm on Nevis Plantation and sip Killer Bees at Sunshine beach bar

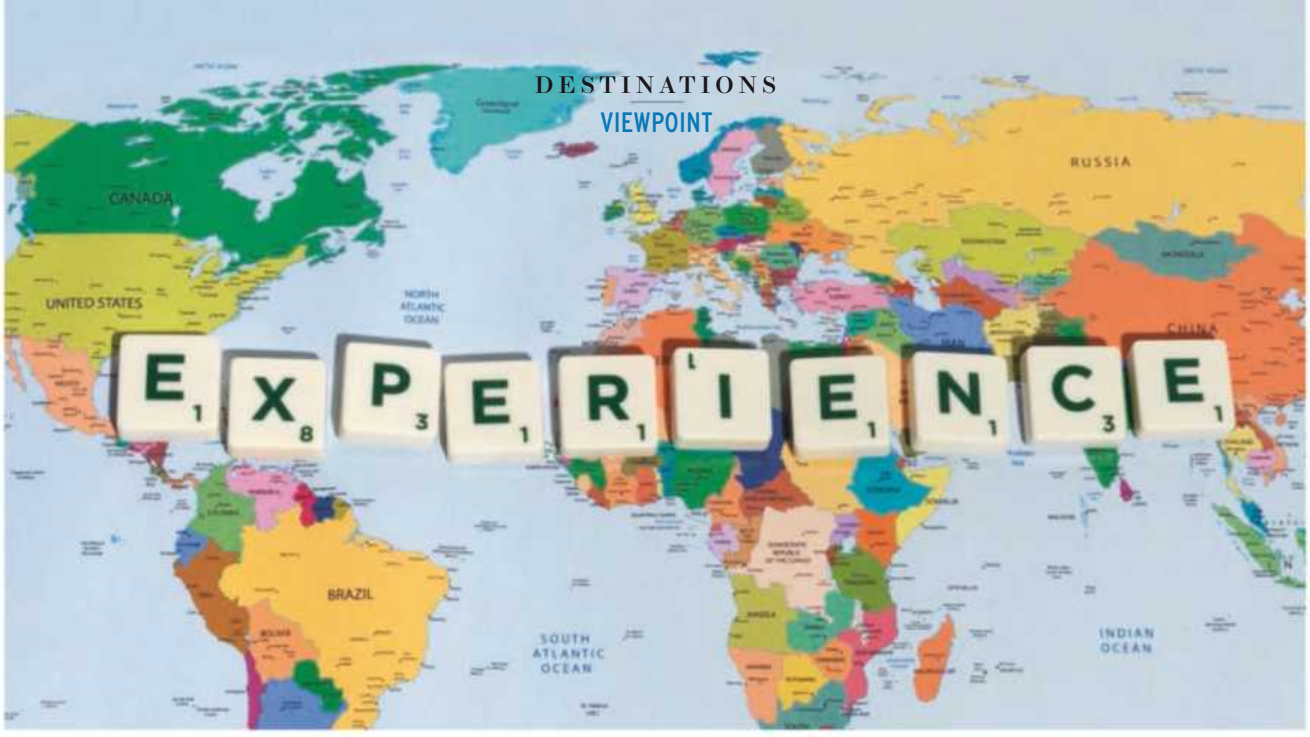
DANA ALLEN/WILDERNESS SAFARIS; VICTOR ANDRADE/GETTY IMAGES; AZURA BENGUERRA; MATTEO COLOMBO/GETTY IMAGES; JEAN-PIERRE LESCOURRET/CORBIS; MARK PARREN TAYLOR; NEVIS TOURISM AUTHORITY; NSEKO PROMOTION BOARD; RIVIERA DEL CONERO; SEYCHELLES TOURIST OFFICE; TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND; TOURISM UTTAR PRADESH



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THE NEW CURRENCY

The value of a holiday these days is measured by the experiences clocked up, memories made and time spent with nearest and dearest, says *House & Garden*'s travel editor **Pamela Goodman**

I wish there was another way of saying 'experiential travel'. I like the idea of 'experience' and I like the idea of 'travel' but somehow, in putting the two together, the phrase smacks of hollow marketing speak and the allure is lost. Like it or not, however, 'experiential travel' is apparently what we're all after these days, and I wouldn't disagree. In the Western world mindless self-indulgence and materialism seem to be fading fast, replaced by a desire to gather experiences rather than 'things'. On the whole we are a newly mindful travelling public who want more from our holidays than simply to tick a box to say we've been there. We want to do stuff, to share stuff, to dig a little deeper, to care a little more about the places we are visiting, to connect with a sense of history and culture, and to collect sights and sounds and tastes and encounters that enrich our memory banks.

The rise and rise of the home-from-home stays, flooding the market through the likes of Airbnb, perfectly captures the mood. How much easier is it now to immerse yourself in a destination, cities in particular, and to live and breathe a place from a different perspective? We love the inside track, the knowledge of a local and the idea that visitors we may be but tourists we are not.

Travel companies are adapting too, binning the generic package deals and offering more and more holidays designed on a personal level where experience gained is the core criteria. No corner of the world seems too far flung and no request too extraordinary: breakfast with an Eskimo on the polar ice cap? You only have to ask.

And then there's the growing popularity of the multi-generational holiday and the emergence of companies planning holidays abroad for extended families or large groups of friends, or for special occasions. The bang for your buck these days often comes from the company of your nearest and dearest with the best experiences being as much about who you are with as where you are.

From my own perspective as a ludicrously well-travelled person, I find it is often the simple holidays that leave the most lasting impressions. The cycling holiday in the Loire; the gathering of friends for a birthday party in Spain; the family New Year's Eve living like a local in an apartment in Prague. But the five days I spent in the spring of 2015, walking near Sintra in Portugal in the company of one of my oldest friends, was one of the best. It was travel, experience and time well spent all beautifully rolled into one.

Travel tech

Be in the know when you're on the go by downloading the latest travel apps

ENJOY PEACE OF MIND

Use the Dashlane app to securely store passwords, credit card numbers, IDs and billing address details on your phone, tablet and laptop so they're easily accessible. Use it to autofill passport and driving license information to speed up flight check-in and car hire too. Free for Android and iOS devices. *dashlane.com*

STAY CONNECTED

Prevent international roaming charges and having to pay and enter your personal details every time you want to surf the internet by using the iPass app. It gives you fast, hassle-free connection and unlimited access to the nearest wifi hotspot. From £16 per month. *ipass.com*

ARRIVE FEELING REFRESHED

The SkyZen app works with the Jawbone fitness wristband, from £39.99, so you can monitor your health and well-being before, during and after a flight. It tracks your activity and sleep throughout your journey and offers advice on how to combat jetlag. Free for iOS devices (iPhone, iPad and iPod touch). *apple.co/1NioLBl* *Emily Peck*

ARUNAS GABALIS /ALAMY; PIXELATE IMAGING



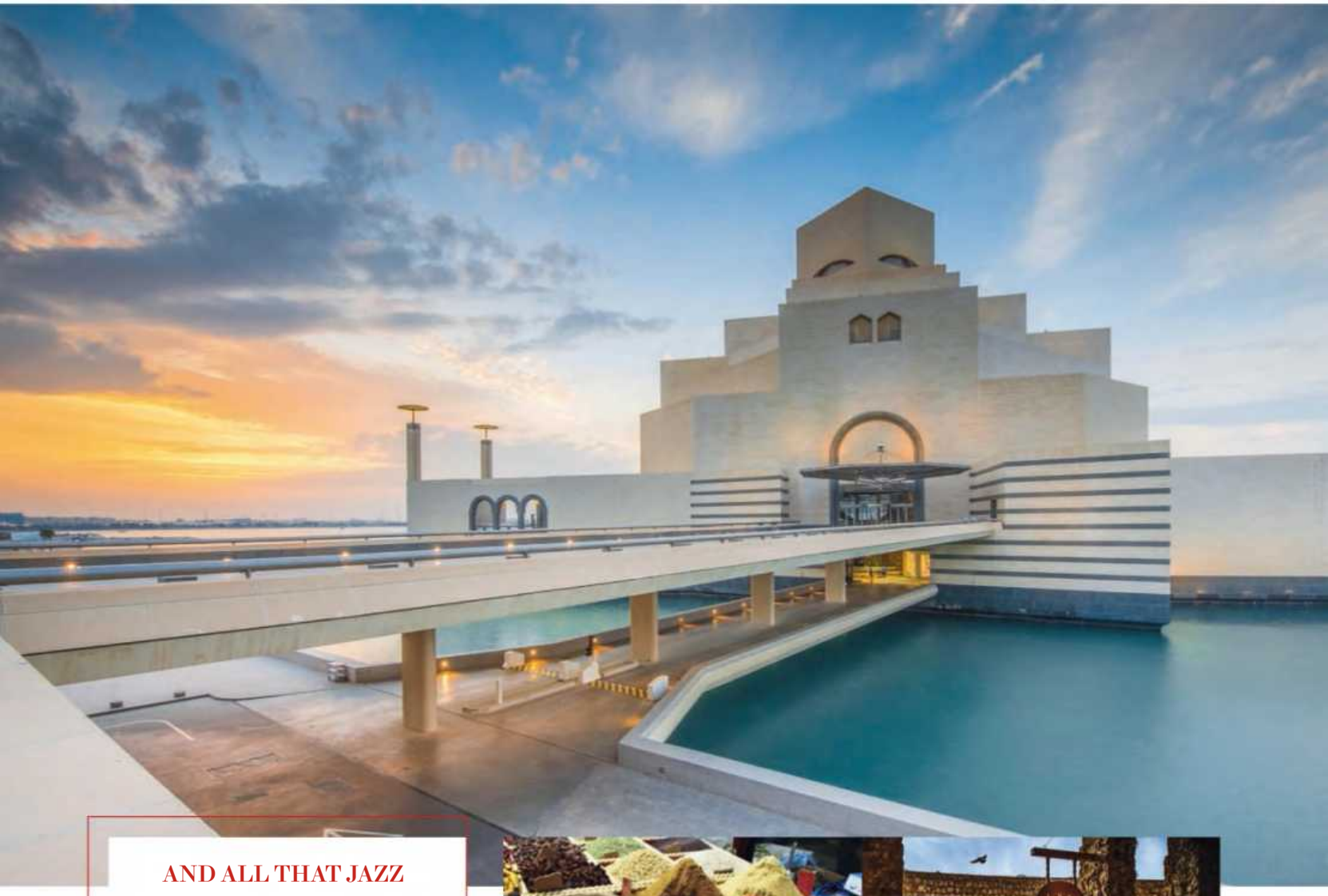
THE TIME IS NOW

A THRIVING CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE, WORLD-CLASS DINING, ARCHITECTURE AND SPORTS EVENTS MEET AUTHENTIC ARAB HOSPITALITY IN QATAR – A DESTINATION WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED IN 2016

A cluster of bright, white geometric buildings shines and reflects in the desert like a beacon. From inside, a 45-metre-tall glass wall offers far-reaching views of the glittering Gulf below where traditional dhows cruise past giant palms and gravity-defying architectural masterpieces built on land reclaimed from the sea. The Museum of Islamic Art, designed by I.M. Pei, is one of the Middle East's most talked about buildings. Perched between the city of Doha and the Persian Gulf, this contemporary icon – filled with priceless art treasures from across the centuries – encapsulates the essence of Qatar, a country at the crossroads of history and the future, of traditional and contemporary culture – a country just waiting to be discovered.

On Doha's changing skyline, another architectural masterpiece taking shape is Jean Nouvel's National Museum of Qatar which, when it opens on the Corniche in 2017, will artfully preserve the Gulf's legendary maritime traditions. State-of-the-art laser scanning and digital photography will chronicle Qatar's pearling and fishing histories, as will 3D digital models of traditional dhows, the vessel of choice for merchants and fishermen across the centuries. Embracing the modern to preserve the past reflects Qatar's vision for the country – a vision that is also embodied in Katara Cultural Village. Designed in the style of traditional Qatari desert architecture, the centre fosters cultural exchange through events such as art exhibitions, and is home to the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. Music lovers should also head for Jazz at Lincoln Center Doha, located in the St Regis Hotel (see right).

Qatar may be fast changing, but it exudes a strong sense of history that sets it apart from its more exuberant neighbours. There are enough luxury hotels, world-class restaurants and designer shops to keep even the pickiest globetrotter happy, but at the archaeological sites, the souqs, and in the mysterious sand dunes of the desert, there is a bygone charm and an undiscovered air that is increasingly hard to find in today's modern world.



AND ALL THAT JAZZ

St Regis Hotels & Resorts and Jazz at Lincoln Center have forged a partnership to bring two New York icons together to create a series of jazz clubs around the world in St Regis hotels - the first of which is thriving at the St Regis Doha. Jazz at Lincoln Center Doha provides the opportunity for everyone to experience world-class jazz, to learn about its rich history and understand its cultural value in a modern, authentic and bespoke way.







Entering Doha's Souq Waqif (literally 'the standing market') is like opening a door on a long-forgotten world. A recent facelift has smartened things up but its authentic appeal – traditional mud and stone-rendered shops, exposed timber beams and nineteenth-century ambiance – has been painstakingly retained (and air-conditioning units cunningly disguised). Souq Waqif



THIS PAGE Katara Cultural Village is designed in the style of traditional desert architecture. PREVIOUS PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Qatar old and new: dhows moored in front of Doha's furturistic skyline. The Museum of Islamic Art. Inside Doha's Souq Waqif. Katara Cultural Village. Spices for sale in Souq Waqif

offers a fascinating insight into the traditional art of Arabian shopping and impromptu hospitality. In the sandalwood-scented alleys you can watch as hawkers artistically unfurl their striped blankets, listen as *darbuka* drums are played by musical vendors and taste local honey, preserved lemons and delicious dates. As you pick out your souvenirs, perhaps some silverware or frankincense, you can also indulge in some fascinating people-watching as families gently barter for their weekly shop. A fitting finale to an afternoon wiled away at the souq is a trip out to the teal-coloured waters of the Arabian Gulf aboard a traditional dhow – the quintessential way to watch the sunset.

The souq also hints at the Qataris fanatical love of sport. The magnificent birds of prey on display at the Falcon Souq – where owners are only too happy to show off their handling skills – prove how these feathered hunters still play an important role in twenty-first-century Qatari life. The stables at the souq, displaying Arabian thoroughbreds, also give a clue to one of Qatar's most loved past-times, horseracing, aka the 'sport of sheikhs'. In fact, sports enthusiasts in Qatar will find themselves in good company whether at high-profile international events like the PGA Golf tournament or when trying out camel racing or off-roading in 4X4s (dune bashing) in the desert.

EXQUISITE TASTES

FROM HUMMUS TO HAKKASAN, DOHA'S DINING SCENE IS RICH IN FLAVOUR

Gastronomes will find themselves particularly well served in Doha, a city that hums to its own culinary rhythms. It has developed a strong and successful multicultural food scene that includes world-renowned chefs specialising in Middle Eastern, Indian, Italian, South-East Asian and Japanese food. There are restaurant brands you will recognise, such as Carluccios, Hakkasan, Nobu and Gordon Ramsay, as well as plenty of smaller Middle Eastern cafés that provide the setting for lazy, laid-back suppers of hummus, salads and shishas. A local-style meal in Souq Waqif is a must-try at least once.

It's not just active types who find the lure of Qatar's desert culture irresistible. These are the dunes that encapsulate the Orient of the imagination – one of camel caravans, hospitality and hidden



HIDDEN QATAR

A FEW LESSER-KNOWN GEMS WORTH SEEKING OUT

- History buffs should not miss the walled coastal town of Al Zubarah in the north of the country which flourished as a pearling and trading centre in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Here you will find preserved – but pleasingly sand-blown – palaces, mosques, courtyard houses and fishermen's huts.
- For something more active, local tour outfits offer paddle boarding on the calm Gulf waters around Doha. Suitable for children over the age of three, it's a fun family activity and easier than it sounds.
- Another out-of-the-ordinary family-friendly experience is the Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim Al Thani private museum, 15 miles west of Doha. As well as the 15,000 or so artefacts that are on display – including fossils, manuscripts and textiles – there are also fishing boats and traditional Qatari houses, 1,000 Arabian oryx, gazelles, and peacocks.
- After all the activity, seek R&R at one of Qatar's excellent spas. Many are located within Doha's top-end hotels and have expert therapists from all over the world.

oases. It is within the giant sandbanks of the desert, unhampered by light pollution, that you can enjoy an evening that combines culture with cosmology: a traditional desert barbeque becomes a stargazing adventure when night falls.

Quietly, but confidently, Qatar, with its hospitality, year-round sunshine and world-class sports scene, is quickly establishing itself as a sought-after holiday destination for those in the know. Go now, before word gets out.

Destinology offers three nights' B&B at W Doha, including flights with Qatar Airways, from £1,145pp. 01204-821235; destinology.co.uk. Expedia offers three nights at the Hilton Doha from £1,027pp, flights with Qatar Airways. 0330-123 1235; expedia.co.uk. For more information, visit the Qatar Tourism Authority website at qatartourism.gov.qa



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Katara Cultural Village. Falconry. Pearl Divers. Sheikh Faisal Museum. Zubarah Fort. West Bay. Qatar hosts the PGA Golf



GRACIOUS *meet* BREATHTAKING

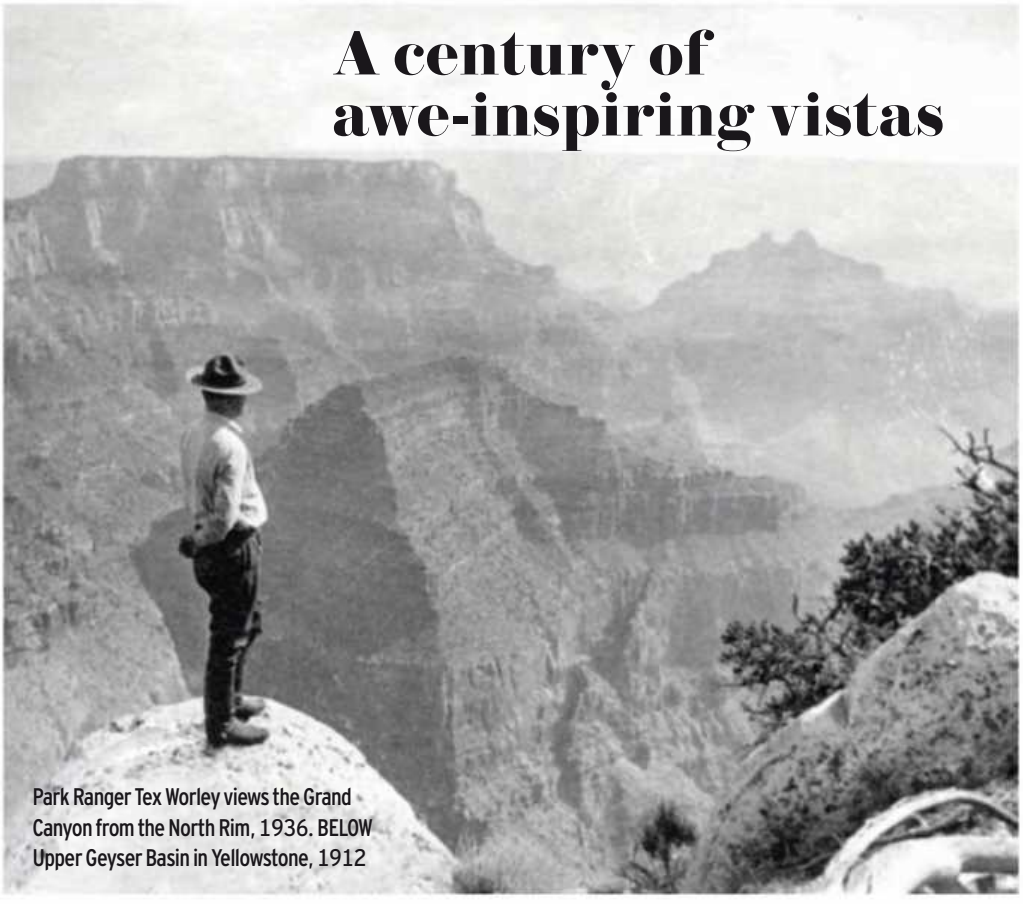
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Park Ranger Tex Worley views the Grand Canyon from the North Rim, 1936. BELOW Upper Geyser Basin in Yellowstone, 1912



Established as a national park in 1872, Yellowstone in Wyoming – with its crystalline lakes, canyons and geysers – was the first of its kind. Now more than 400 parks come under the stewardship of America's National Parks Service which was established in 1916 to recognise the need to protect such areas of natural beauty and wilderness. In August, the Service marks its centenary with a host of events across the USA celebrating the great outdoors as well as a new 3D IMAX documentary narrated by Robert Redford and filmed in 30 of the national parks. *National Parks Adventure* is released on February 12. *discoveramerica.com/outdoors*



NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE/DISCOVERAMERICA.COM

THE DRIVE TO SUCCEED

It's north-east Spain, but not as most of us know it. Inland from Barcelona, uphill and off-road, Abercrombie & Kent has launched a series of driving adventures in partnership with Land Rover against the backdrop of the Montserrat Mountains. The action takes place on Les Comes Estate, renowned among enthusiasts for its challenging passes, some of which are used in the qualifying stages of the Camel Trophy and G4 Challenge. Departures in September 2016. Three nights from £3,995pp. *01242-547898; abercrombiekent.co.uk*

Travel tech



ZONE OUT

Audio-Technica's Bluetooth 'ATH-ANC40BT' noise-cancelling headphones, £149, will deliver crystal-clear sound wirelessly from up to two devices. *audiotechnicashop.com*



SAY CHEESE

Back up your camera roll on the go and free up space for more photos, videos and music, with the Leef iBRIDGE for Apple iOS devices. From £49 for 16GB. *leefco.com*



PERK UP

Enjoy espressos with crema wherever you are, with the Minipresso hand-powered coffee machine, £49.99. Once you fill it with hot water and ground coffee and start to pump, the pressure inside reaches 116psi – just like a traditional coffee machine. *thefowndry.com*

Emily Peck



NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

White-sand beaches, calm waters and reefs – the idyllic islands of the Maldives are as perfect an environment for fitness as they are for lounging, as **Louisa Parker Bowles** finds out

No matter how good your intentions are to be healthy on holiday, when you're in a place like the Maldives, it's hard to sacrifice time outdoors for time in the gym, however sleek and well-equipped it may be. But, in fact, there's no need: nature provides the perfect playground in which to stretch, strengthen and tone.

At LUX* South Ari Atoll in the Maldives (pictured), activities that champion the beautiful surroundings are integral to the new LUX* Me Wellness Concierge service, launched in partnership with wellness expert Stephen Price of SP&Co London. The aim of the service is to offer tailored programmes that help guests achieve their well-being and fitness goals. The approach is holistic, with fitness, nutrition and healing all taken into consideration, but in particular, the concierge encourages guests to get active in the natural environment, through adventures such as diving, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding and yoga.

My arrival at LUX* South Ari Atoll, with a gentle splash on a seaplane from Malé, was followed by an initial 20-minute consultation with the resort's wellness concierge, Boni, during which we discussed what key things could improve my overall happiness and physical vitality. As a mother of two young girls, I have little time to myself, so practical ways to incorporate these at home were going to be essential. A programme was subsequently mapped out that incorporated 'me' time in the spa (including a Shirley Page signature facial that worked wonders for my dry and lacklustre post-partum skin), with exercise and relaxation.

For those who yearn to feel the burn, a session with a personal trainer in the outdoor jungle gym is a good place to start. I favoured beachside yoga, gentle walks and cycling around the island, as well as swimming and snorkelling – although I avoided twilight swims, as that was when they fed the baby sharks and manta rays off the piers and I couldn't help but wonder where the mummies and daddies were!

I appreciated the holistic and sustainable, but also relaxed, approach to well-being that the concierge promotes: it's not the strictest regime, but that would have detracted from the surroundings. Reflecting on my stay, I realised it is vital to find time each day for myself – be that a short run or a yoga class – no matter how full the laundry basket.

ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO Peak season in the Maldives is December to February, thanks to low humidity and clear skies. Those in the know travel from March to May when temperatures start to rise but prices fall.

HOW LUX* Me Wellness Concierge Service – free initial consultation; subsequent consultations, £67 for one hour. A seven-night stay at LUX* South Ari Atoll costs from £2,645pp B&B including transfers and all flights with Original Travel (020-3582 4990; originaltravel.co.uk).

ACTIVE RELAXATION

Traditional beach resorts are finding new ways to entice you from your sunlounger



In **MAURITIUS**, Shanti Maurice has come up with yoga biking: a leisurely cycling tour of the island's south coast punctuated with stops for beachside yoga and guided meditation to the sound of the waves. *shantimaurice.com*



Guests at Nizuc in Punta Nizuc, **MEXICO**, can explore the resort's protected mangroves by paddle board; or better still, improve their core strength and balance by attempting a series of yoga moves while balanced on a paddle board in the shallows off the pristine beach. *nizuc.com*



On-the-water spin classes have been launched – quite literally – from Sugar Beach resort's enviable spot on Anse de Pitons in **ST LUCIA**. Guests can now take to the Caribbean Sea by peddle power, on a Schiller Bike – a cross between a bike and a catamaran – for instructor-led classes or aquatic explorations. *viceroyhotelsandresorts.com*

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PARISIAN BEAUTY



AT NINETY YEARS YOUNG, LE BRISTOL PARIS – OETKER COLLECTION FLAGSHIP HOTEL – IS LOOKING EXQUISITE AFTER A RESTORATION COSTING OVER €150 MILLION

Since her unveiling on rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in 1925, Le Bristol Paris has been synonymous with style and beauty. The great and the glamorous of Parisian and international high society – from Coco Chanel and Marilyn Monroe to Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali – have all swirled into the embrace of her elegant lobby.

Now, ninety years on, having been the first hotel in the French capital to be awarded 'Palace' status, and after an extensive restoration that has seen a seven-room Royal Suite and Honeymoon Suite added and Epicure, the hotel's three-star Michelin restaurant, refreshed, Le Bristol remains the address for an unrivalled stay in Paris.



Spread over 3,200 square feet overlooking Le Bristol's iconic French garden, the Royal Suite has the feel of an eighteenth-century country residence. Its magnificent double sitting room is panelled in oak, with walls painted in age-old designs; throughout are fine furnishings by the likes of Rubelli, Meissen and Manuel Canovas. The Imperial Suite boasts private dining for up to 12 people and a bedroom with a private hammam, while the Honeymoon Suite has four balconies, with one revealing magnificent views of the Eiffel Tower. After all, this is the city of romance.

THE GREAT AND GLAMOROUS OF FRENCH SOCIETY HAVE SWIRLED INTO THE LOBBY

Epicure, Le Bristol's acclaimed gastronomic restaurant run by head chef Eric Frechon, is a leading light on the Parisian dining scene. Neither stuffy nor pretentious, it has a comfortable, bright ambience and, of course, those three Michelin stars. Add to this one star for Le Bristol's duplex luxury brasserie, Le 114 Faubourg, and you have the only hotel in Europe to hold four Michelin stars.

Le Bar du Bristol is another gem. Exuding timeless elegance, it has the feel of an old English club, with thick silk drapes creating intimacy, and a handsome Versailles oak floor; bookcases flank a nineteenth-century fireplace made in marble from Sienna. A mural by contemporary painter Thierry Bruet contrasts with the decorative Aubusson tapestry hanging behind the bar, which dates from 1740. Beneath its depictions of a Chinese garden and pagodas, head barman Maxime Hoerth, who was named Best French Craftsman in the Barman category in 2011, mixes up his signature cocktails. Kick back with his Bristol Old Fashioned No 1 and a selection of Eric Frechon's scrumptious bar tapas.

Relaxation can also be found in Spa Le Bristol by La Prairie, which is generously spread over three floors of the hotel and comprises eight beauty treatment cabins as well as a Russian wet room with the first affusion (hydrotherapy) shower in Paris, a women-only Turkish bath and a beautiful









SWEET HARMONY

A NEW SERIES OF CLASSICAL CONCERTS AT LE BRISTOL

Throughout 2016, Le Bristol Paris hosts a series of monthly classical music recitals showcasing some of the world's finest talents, from piano virtuosos to breathtaking singers, cellists and violinists. The concerts begin on February 15 with soprano Melody Louledjian and pianist Antoine Palloc performing 'Great Women in Love at the Opera'. Other highlights include award-winning contemporary pianist Anne Queffélec, who has performed under the direction of some of the world's greatest conductors, on April 18. The concerts will take place in one of the appropriately opulent salons.

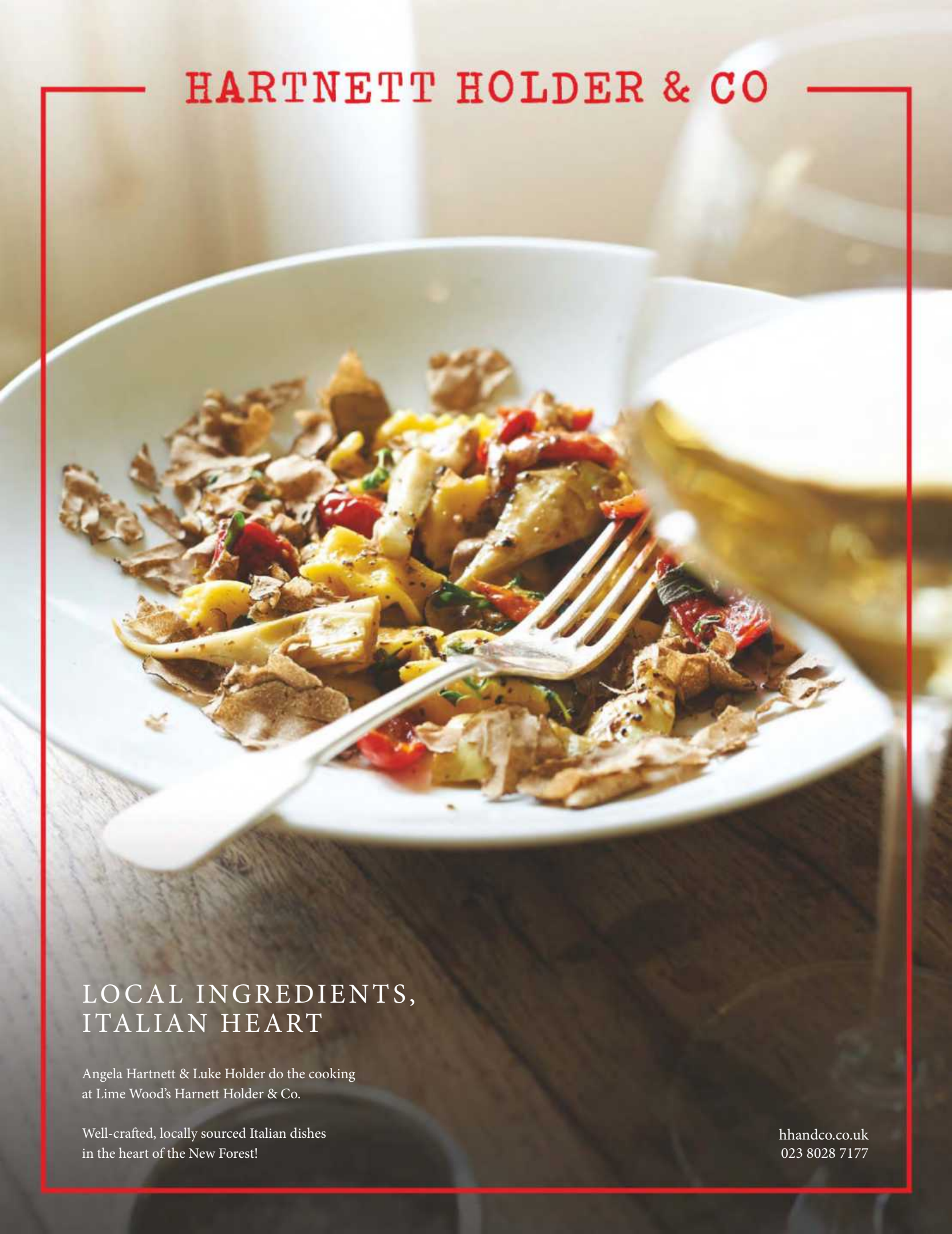
indoor garden. The hotel also has a stunning swimming pool decorated in teak and glass in the style of one of the most beautiful yachts of the nineteenth century, the *Christina*, owned by Aristotle Onassis. Take a dip (it's a comfortable 28˚C) or settle on a lounger on the vast sundeck that overlooks Paris – one of the city's most appealing vantage points.

The recent renovations have renewed and enhanced Le Bristol for the contemporary traveller, but there is much about Le Bristol that is unchanged. For one, the love and care of the family which has been its custodian since 1978, the Oetkers. It was under the attentive, creative eye of Maja Oetker and internationally renowned designer Yves Rochon that the restorations were carried out. The hotel retains the feel of a grand home away from home, with sizeable rooms and suites (all 188 of them), inviting and dynamic public spaces and the largest hotel garden in Paris. The jewel in the crown of the Oetker family's prestigious collection of five-star hotels worldwide – which also includes The Lanesborough in London and Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes – Le Bristol Paris is, quite simply, the City of Light's most alluring hotel.

Doubles from €1,100, room only. 00-33-1 53 43 43 00; lebristolparis.com



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT
The dramatic wrought-iron and marble main staircase at Le Bristol. One of the Prestige Elysée Suites – a private apartment in the heart of Paris. Le Bar has the feel of an English gentleman's club. Epicure restaurant holds three Michelin stars. The pool and terrace at Spa Le Bristol by La Prairie have enviable views across the city's rooftops


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A TASTE OF FRANCE



Chef **Raymond Blanc** recommends some of his favourite spots from his home city of Besançon to Paris and Provence

EAT My favourite restaurant is a Relais & Châteaux, two-star Michelin place called L'Oasis in La Napoule on the Côte d'Azur. It is right on the port, it has a lovely terrace and some of the best food in the south of France. *oasis-raimbault.com*

DRINK My home town is Besançon in Franche-Comté, with the rugged Jura mountains to the south east and vineyards to the south: its Savagnin and Poulsard wines are well worth a try. Have an aperitif at my favourite bistro, Le Vin et L'Assiette: it is owned by my dear friend Bernard Leroy, who is not only a fine host but also an extraordinary vigneron. *97 Rue Battant, Besançon*

SHOP Parisian food markets are among the best in the world. The Marché des Enfants Rouges, which was created in the 1600s, is wonderful. I love sitting at a table, eating and talking to other visitors. *39 Rue de Bretagne, Paris*

THE NARROW COBBLED STREETS AND TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES OF COLMAR ARE LIKE A FAIRY TALE

WANDER I love Alsace. The narrow, cobbled streets and beautiful timber-framed houses of Colmar are like visiting a fairy tale. Such wonderful cafés to explore, serving excellent fruit grown in local orchards. They also make fruit liqueurs – my favourite is kirsch.

ESCAPE Take a boat from Hyères on the Côte d'Azur to the idyllic isles of Lavant, Port-Cros and Porquerolles. They're known as the Golden Isles, and the beaches are simply beautiful. *hyeres-tourism.co.uk*

THINK I love the Musée de La Halle Saint-Pierre bookshop in Montmartre: there's a huge selection of volumes on art and culture to browse and buy. *hallesaintpierre.org*

RELAX For several years, I have gone to Le Club de Cavalière & Spa close to Le Lavandou in Provence because I find it absolutely perfect. It is on an enchanting little stretch of beach. They also do the best *tarte aux figues. clubdecavaliere.com*







FROM TOP Beach on Porquerolles. *Vin jaune* from the Jura. Timber-framed buildings in Colmar. L'Oasis terrace



LEFT TO RIGHT 'Margot' dress, 'Crystal' tunic and 'Phia' shorts

SUNSHINE STYLE

Inspired by the tropical gardens and vibrant colours of its resort destinations, One&Only has launched its second collection of kaftans, dresses, shorts and shifts, designed by the company's own director of retail, Preston Schroeder. Made in light cotton and rayon voile in mainly blue and yellow – reflecting the resorts' abundance of sea and sunshine – the pieces are an easy fit into any holiday wardrobe. The 2016 One&Only Collection is available in the NEO boutiques in One&Only resorts. *oneandonlyresorts.com*

INTERVIEW BY CAROLYN BOYD. PHOTOS: CRT FRANCHE-COMTE/MICHEL JOLY; HYERES TOURISME; OT COLMAR



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ECO-FRIENDLY

LES TROIS CYPRES, OPPEDE-LE-VIEUX, PROVENCE, *4 bedrooms, sleeps 8*

Within walking distance of the charming hilltop village of Oppède-le-Vieux with its narrow ancient streets and medieval ramparts, Les Trois Cyprès is an elegant Provençal *mas*, brought bang up-to-date with eco-friendly credentials including a sophisticated geothermic heating and cooling system. Views are quintessential Luberon – with ancient olive trees alongside vines heavy with grenache, muscat and syrah grapes. The large, private pool sits in a walled garden which traps the abundant sunshine, though there are numerous shaded areas in which to escape the summer heat. *From £1,070pp, per week based on full occupancy.*



BEST FOR SIGHTSEEING

MAS DE QUATRE SAISONS, GRASSE, PROVENCE, *7 bedrooms, sleeps 14*

Located near to Grasse, in the hills set back from the Côte d'Azur littoral, this villa is well located for visiting the region's pretty villages, such as Mougins, Saint Paul de Vence, Vence and Valbonne, as well as the coastal resorts of Cannes and Antibes. An eighteenth-century bastide, it has stone fireplaces, terracotta floors, oak-beamed ceilings and traditional Provençal shutters. There's an outdoor heated pool with a pergola, as well as pétanque court, basketball and table tennis. The pool house has a thoughtfully equipped summer kitchen and bar area and, inside, there is a family entertainment room – making it perfect for multi-generational families. *From £433pp, per week based on full occupancy.*



GREAT FOR FAMILIES

BASTIDE DES MURIERS, BONNIEUX, PROVENCE, *6 bedrooms, sleeps 13*

French interior design and cuisine feature strongly at Bastide des Muriers, an eighteenth-century farmhouse in the heart of Provence. The kitchen is a masterpiece of reclaimed dark wood complemented by marble work surfaces, white-washed walls and poured-concrete floors. A black La Cornue Château cooker takes pride of place. A large children's room provides space for play indoors, while the villa also boasts numerous outdoor areas for family gatherings, including an 18m pool, fire-pit with seating and a barbecue. A 24-hour concierge and daily housekeeping provides hotel-style service, with the independence of a private house. *From £902pp, per week based on full occupancy.*



CLASSIC PROVENCE

LE PONT ROMAIN, NEAR BONNIEUX, PROVENCE *6 bedrooms, sleeps 12*

Close to the village of Bonnieux, Le Pont Romain began life in the eighteenth century as a school; today it is a splendid, traditional Provençal villa. Everything about the house invites relaxation, from the knotted-wood table shaded beneath the plane tree in the garden to the distressed-leather sofa, once owned by the writer Peter Mayle. The exterior is a delicious cliché of lavender and pastel-blue shutters, with the mountains of the Luberon National Park visible beyond. Despite its history, all six bedrooms have en-suite, there is wifi throughout and numerous televisions with satellite, including in the delightful snug. *From £362pp, per week based on full occupancy.*



BLOW THE BUDGET

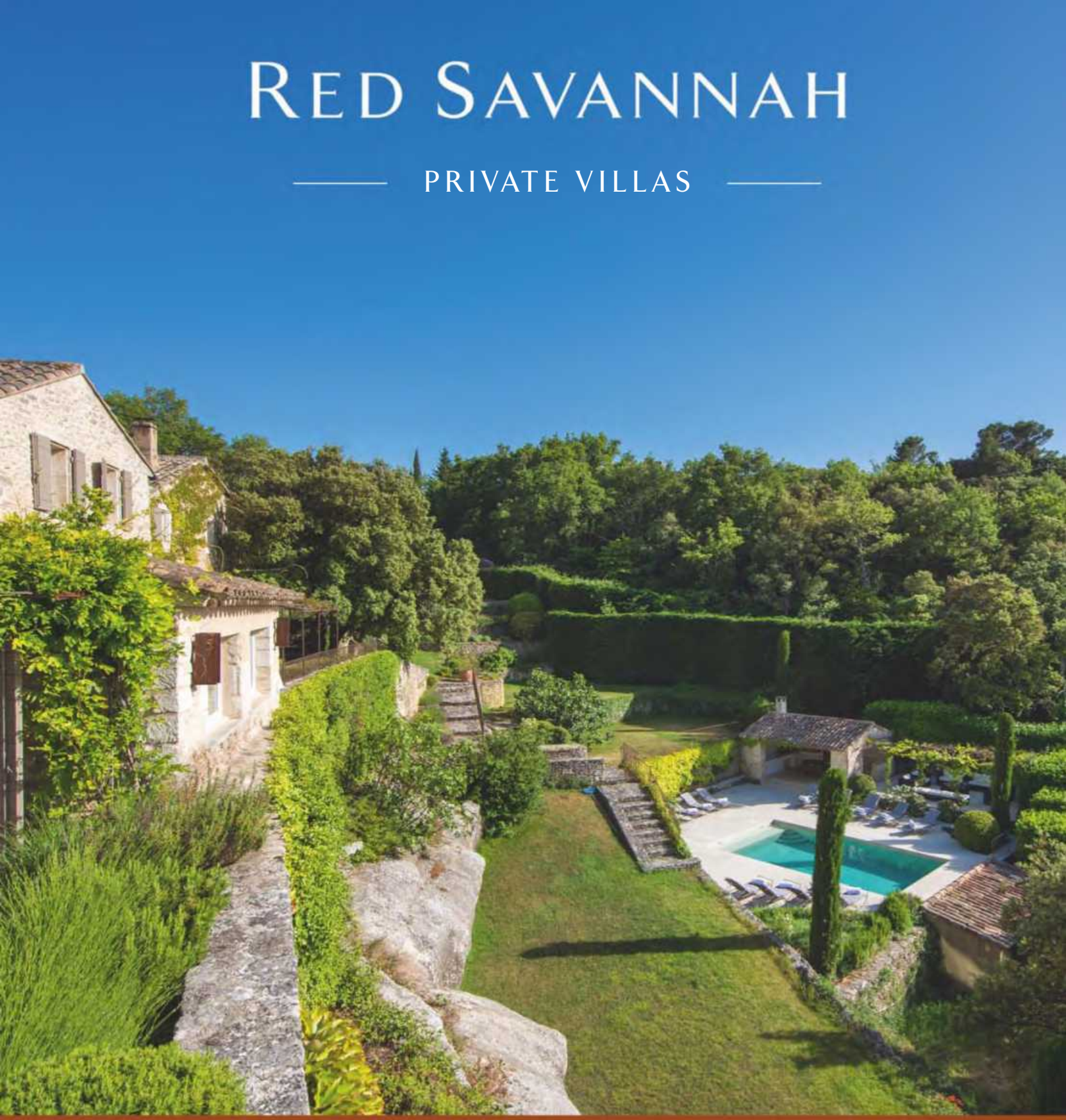
VILLA BAYVIEW, VILLEFRANCHE, COTE D'AZUR, *5 bedrooms, sleeps 10*

Stunning Villa Bayview commands breathtaking views over Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat and the Mediterranean from its clifftop location – one of the best on the Côte d'Azur. Just a few minutes' walk from the restaurants and boutiques of Villefranche, Villa Bayview is a contemporary masterpiece, with monochrome interiors combining stone, glass and floor-to-ceiling windows with occasional splashes of vibrant colour. It has an infinity pool with stunning views, several levels of landscaped gardens and even a vehicle 'turntable' to turnaround the supercar. Staff includes a chef, housekeeper, butler and concierge. *From £2,056pp, per week based on full occupancy.*

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GOING PLACES





FROM TOP The majestic *Crystal Symphony* sails into Sydney, Australia. *Crystal Serenity*'s spacious penthouse comes complete with a generous verandah. The new, 62-guest *Crystal Esprit* makes its maiden voyage around the Seychelles on December 23, 2015 for Crystal Yacht Cruises

CRYSTAL CRUISES – WINNER OF MORE AWARDS THAN ANY OTHER LUXURY CRUISE LINE, HOTEL OR RESORT – IS EXPANDING ITS REACH WITH NEW SIX-STAR YACHTS, RIVER CRUISES AND ITS OWN DREAMLINER, FOR THE ULTIMATE IN PRIVATE GLOBAL TOURING

Time never stands still in the world of travel, with enticing destinations opening up all the time alongside new ways to discover the wonders of the globe. The same must be said for Crystal Cruises, whose legendary hospitality has kept it at the top of the cruise industry for more than a quarter of a century, amassing an array of accolades on the way.

Crystal's approach to hospitality is uncompromising: the focus on board its fleet of six-star, all-inclusive ships is on abundant space, extensive choices and quality and classic, but not stuffy, service. This means a professional but genuinely warm welcome from staff, officers and crew; a plethora of high-quality, and often exclusive, shore excursions, on-board education and entertainment; a wealth of dining venues, including speciality restaurants with menus created by star chefs such as Nobu Matsuhisa; bars offering complimentary Champagne, fine wines and premium spirits; and even the world's only floating spa designed to feng shui principles. Crystal guests are simply spoilt for choice – and there's more to come...

This month (December) Crystal launches the eagerly awaited Crystal Yacht Cruises, which will be followed by Crystal's first river yacht in July 2016, with a further four in 2017. And, appropriately for a brand that's flying high, 2017 also sees the launch of Crystal Luxury Air, offering extravagant round-the-world trips on its own 60-seater Boeing 787 Dreamliner – making Crystal's newly expanded fleet your passport to the world.

READER OFFER

Book any Crystal Cruises itinerary before February 29, 2016 and receive up to US$200 on-board credit per stateroom. Offer based on two people sharing. Quote 'HGJAN1' when booking.

For more information, call Crystal Cruises on 020-7399 7601 or visit crystalcruises.co.uk

DON'T MISS THE BOAT

Our year-round guide to where to cruise when will ensure you cast off in just the right season

SPRING

Calm, clear seas in the **MALDIVES** in winter and early spring make this the best time to be **ON THE WATER**. Divers and snorkellers will love *Soneva in Aqua* (soneva.com), a new two-cabin luxury yacht offering two- to five-day charters from Soneva Fushi resort around the Baa Atoll, a Unesco World Biosphere Reserve. From £2,973 per night. **JAPAN'S TEMPLES AND SHRINES** are awash with pink **CHERRY BLOSSOMS** from late March to mid April. Noble Caledonia's (noble-caledonia.co.uk) 14-day 'Cherry Blossom in Imperial Japan' journey hits all the prime spots including Kyoto, Nara and Tokyo. It departs London on March 27. From £4,995pp, including flights. See fruit **ORCHARDS IN BLOOM** in the **NORWEGIAN FJORDS** from Holland America Line's (hollandamerica.com) new ship *ms Koningsdam*. Seven-night round trip from Amsterdam departs May 22. From £1,689pp, including flights.





SUMMER

Most **CRUISE SHIPS ARE SUN SEEKERS**: when the temperatures start to rise in Europe many arrive from across the Atlantic, staying from April to October, largely in the **MEDITERRANEAN** and **ADRIATIC**. With so many ships, large and small, there's something for everyone, from Barcelona to Istanbul. Summer is also the best time for sailing in the **CANADIAN** and **EUROPEAN ARCTIC**. Spot polar bears and musk oxen and watch icebergs float by while cruising around Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland on board Hurtigruten's 15 to 16-day 'Extremes of the Arctic' cruise (hurtigruten.co.uk) which departs Longyearbyen on August 24. From £5,274pp, including flights. For **GRIZZLIES**, pick from numerous cruises with Holland America Line (hollandamerica.com) which has seven ships in **ALASKA** from April to September. Prefer something warmer? **CLEAR SEAS** make August the best time to visit **FRENCH POLYNESIA**. Local specialist *Paul Gauguin* (pgcruises.com), has a 10-night round-trip from Tahiti to the Tuamotus and Society Islands, departing August 10, from £5,394pp, including flights.





AUTUMN

Partial to port? Celebrate the annual **GRAPE HARVEST** in the **DOURO VALLEY**, Portugal while on board the 'Royal Barge', *Spirit of Chartwell*, as part of a 10-night stay-and-cruise package with Titan Travel (titantravel.co.uk), which combines Lisbon and the Duoro River. For departures on September 2 and October 6, 2016, guests will head to Quinta da Avessada for the Duoro Vintage celebrations, which mark a successful grape harvest. From £2,799pp, including flights. See **THE SHADES OF AUTUMN** transform the US and Canadian **EAST COAST** through September and October. *Crystal Serenity* (crystalcruises.co.uk) offers a seven-day cruise from New York City to Quebec City departing September 17, calling in picturesque locations such as Bar Harbour, Maine. From £1,914pp, cruise only. October means **HIGH WATER ON THE IRRAWADDY** in Burma. Once a year Belmond's *Orcaella* (belmond.com) takes full advantage to sail all the way from Bagan and Mandalay to Bhamo on the Chinese border. October 22 is the one chance to join the 11-night 'Gorges of the Far North' journey. From £5,470pp, including flights. Most ships that have been based in Europe for the summer make the **TRANSATLANTIC CROSSING** in autumn, returning to sunnier climes.





WINTER

From November to March, cruise ships follow the sun back to **FLORIDA** and the **CARIBBEAN**, to offer all manner of island-hopping itineraries. Winter in the northern hemisphere also happens to be the best time of year to visit **ANTARCTICA** (where it is summer): A&K (abercrombiekent.com) offers journeys to the White Continent on board Ponant's recently launched ice-class ship *Le Lyrial*. For the ultimate **CHRISTMAS TREAT**, the 'Classic Antarctica' itinerary departs December 26 and costs from £8,246pp, excluding flights. In Northern Europe, **CHRISTMAS MARKETS** are the draw for winter river cruising. Viking River Cruises (vikingrivercruises.co.uk) has a range of festive sailings on its 'longships' on the **DANUBE** and **RHINE**. On-board activities include gingerbread making and a Christmas tree decorating party. December to April is the best time to explore the **AMAZON**, as the water is high and skiffs can delve deeper into the flooded forest. With 23ft more water in the river, you're also closer to the jungle canopy to see monkeys play and birds roosting. Aqua Expeditions (aquaexpeditions.com) has two ships on the Peruvian Amazon with itineraries ranging from three to seven nights. Year-round departures from £2,147pp, cruise only.







CH/VISITNORWAY.COM; DISCOVERAMERICA.COM; JNTO; PONANT



Torres del Paine National Park, Chile: a highlight of the 'South America Passage'

EPIC ADVENTURE

SAILING FROM BUENOS AIRES TO SANTIAGO, HOLLAND AMERICA LINE'S 'SOUTH AMERICA PASSAGE' IS *THE* GREAT BUCKET-LIST JOURNEY

Dancing the tango in Buenos Aires. Tick. Lazing on the beaches of Montevideo. Tick. Spotting rockhopper penguins in the Falkland Islands. Tick. Marvelling at the majesty of Glacier Alley. Watching Andean condors soar gracefully over the Chilean fjords. Wine tasting in the Casablanca Valley. Sipping a Pisco Sour in the Old Quarter of Valparaíso. Tick, tick, tick.

It's amazing what one can pack into the course of two weeks on Holland America Line's 'South American Passage'. Sailing from Buenos Aires, Argentina to Valparaíso (Santiago), Chile, and vice versa, from October 2016 to April 2017, with stops in Montevideo, Uruguay and the Falkland Islands, this once-in-a-lifetime journey is the chance to see, eat, drink and experience the very best of this dramatic and varied region. It is the ultimate bucket-list adventure – and only a cruise could make such a wealth of destinations and cultural immersion possible in just 14 nights.

In every port of call, knowledgeable local guides are on hand to ensure guests make the most of the on-shore excursions. Meanwhile, on-board, a roster of relevant activities embraces the region – from guest lectures to tango and Spanish lessons and even a gaucho barbecue accompanied by the Argentinian *bandoneón*. All this reflects Holland America Line's commitment to the finest on-board guest experience, which includes attentive service, spacious suites and a high staff-to-guest ratio.

For more details, call 0843-374 2300 or visit hollandamerica.co.uk





EXPLORE MORE

Holland America Line visits more worldwide destinations than any other major cruise line. Among its fleet of 14 five-star, mid-size ships – including the new *ms Koningsdam*, which launches in April 2016 – four are based in South America and Antarctica in the winter. Travelling all that way and don't want to miss the White Continent? Then extend your stay: the 21-day 'South America and Antarctica' voyage on board *ms Zaandam* operates in December 2016 and January 2017. While additional cruises in the region tick off the continent's other big draws: the Amazon, Machu Picchu, wildlife in Costa Rica, the Rio carnival and much more.





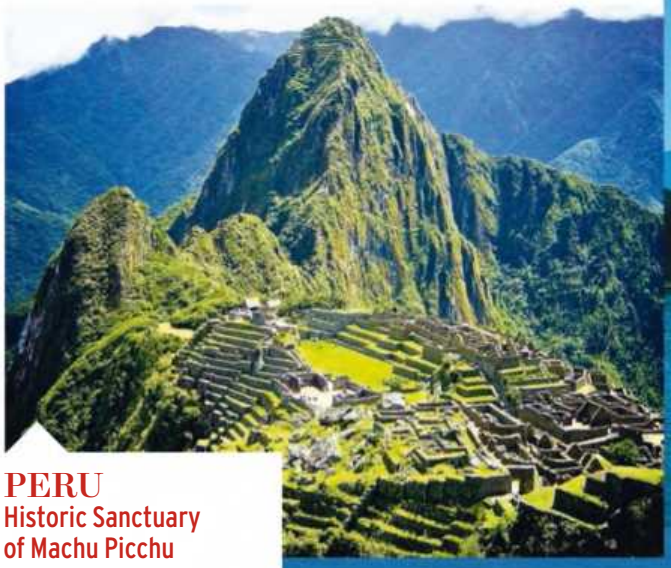
WELCOME TO YOUR WORLD

AWARD-WINNING CRUISE LINE SEABOURN'S EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO GRANTS ACCESS TO THE WORLD'S MOST EXCEPTIONAL PLACES IN FINE STYLE

Seabourn shares with its guests a genuine passion for exploring the world's most exceptional destinations. Its fleet of six-star, small ships journey to iconic and off-the-beaten-track locations across seven continents, giving discerning guests the opportunity for new discoveries and immersion in every location.

Seabourn goes the extra mile to make every journey unforgettable – from the cosseting, luxury environs of its spacious, all-inclusive ships – which have the feel of a private club – to the unrivalled personal service, excellent cuisine and Champagne on tap.

With this eye for the extraordinary, Seabourn has forged an exclusive alliance with UNESCO to support sustainable tourism while offering travellers unparalleled experiences and insight into the world's most treasured monuments and landscapes. In 2016, its guests have the opportunity to visit 82 World Heritage Sites – including all of those featured here – through its optional World Heritage and Discovery Tours. In every destination, UNESCO experts and guest speakers will share their insights with guests on and off the ships, bringing these incredible places to life with originality and making every Seabourn journey utterly unique.

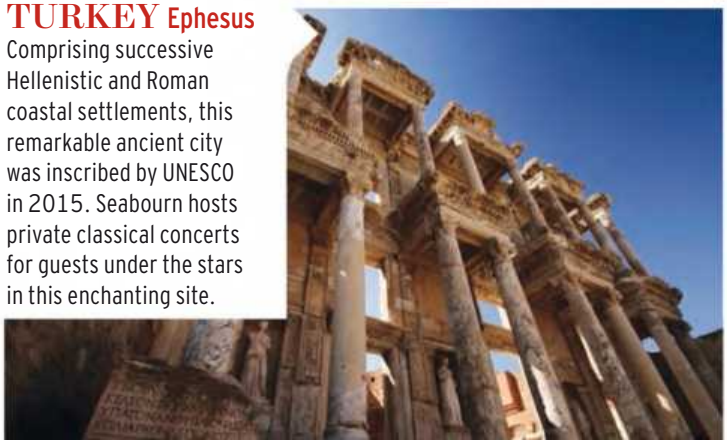


PERU
Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu

Located 2,430m up in a tropical forest, this incredible urban creation of the Inca Empire was inscribed by UNESCO in 1983.

TURKEY Ephesus

Comprising successive Hellenistic and Roman coastal settlements, this remarkable ancient city was inscribed by UNESCO in 2015. Seabourn hosts private classical concerts for guests under the stars in this enchanting site.



CROATIA
Old City of Dubrovnik

The 'Pearl of the Adriatic', located on the Dalmatian coast, Dubrovnik was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 for its Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque churches, monasteries and palaces.





SPAIN
Works of Antoni Gaudí, Barcelona
Seven works of Gaudí in or near Barcelona were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1984, including Casa Batlló and the Sagrada Familia.

AUSTRALIA
Sydney Opera House
Listed in 1973, the Sydney Opera House is a great architectural work of the twentieth century that brings together innovation in both architectural form and structural design.

JORDAN Petra
Surrounded by mountains and half-built, half-carved into the rock, Petra – one of the world's most famous archaeological sites – is where ancient Eastern traditions blend with Hellenistic architecture.



JAPAN
Itsukushima Shinto Shrine
Inscribed in 1996, this shrine on the island of Itsukushima, with its famous *torii* gate 'floating' in the Seto Inland Sea, plays on the contrasts in colour and form between mountains and sea.

MALAYSIA
Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca
Melaka (pictured) and George Town developed over 500 years of trading and cultural exchanges between East and West in the Straits of Malacca. They were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011.



Seabourn offers cruises on seven continents. For details of its itineraries and World Heritage and Discovery Tours, call 0843-373 2000 or visit seabourn.com











FROM LEFT Red-footed booby, short-eared owl and Sally Lightfoot crab on Genovesa island. Flamingoes on Rábida island. Giant tortoise in Santa Cruz's Scalesia forest

Meet the *locals*

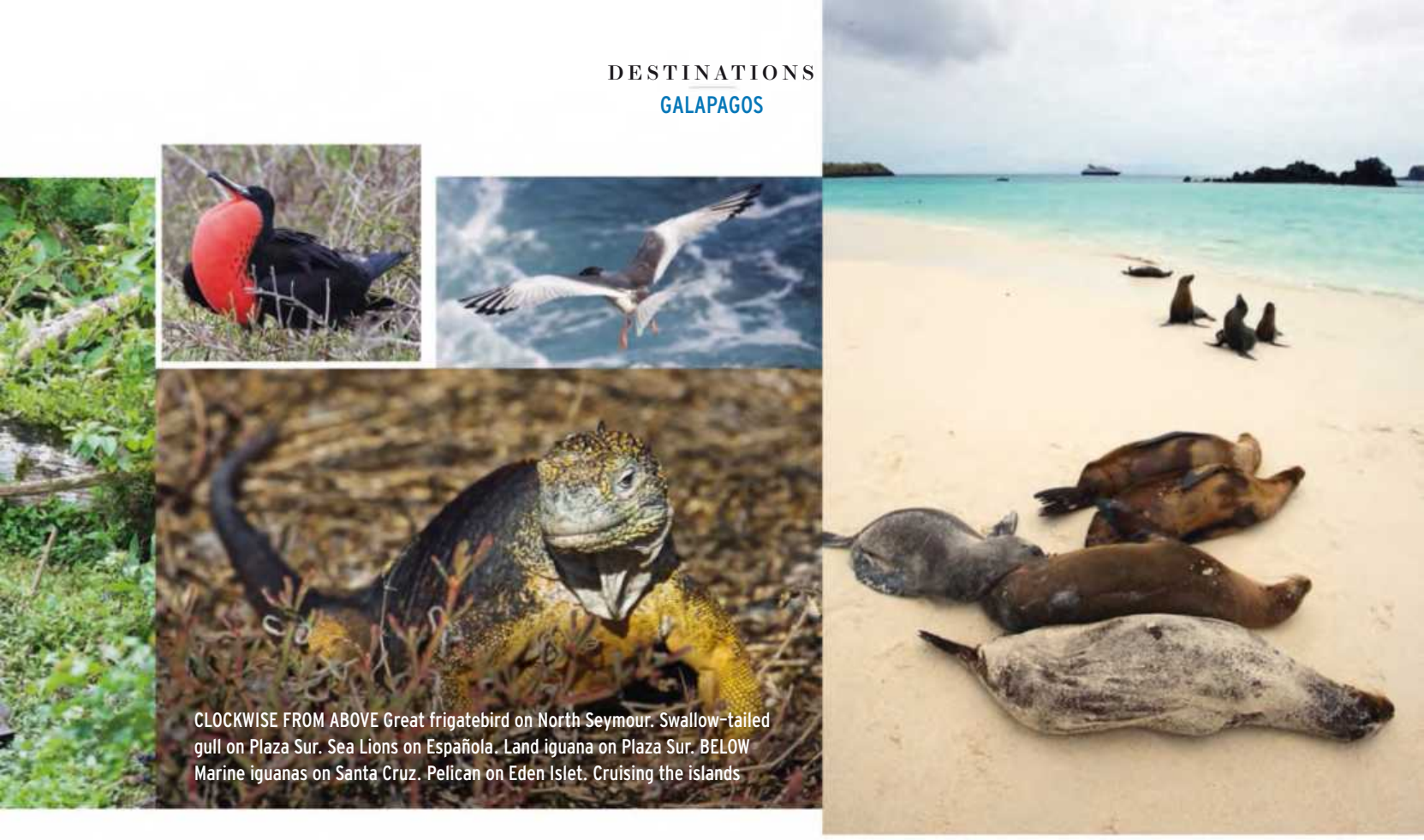








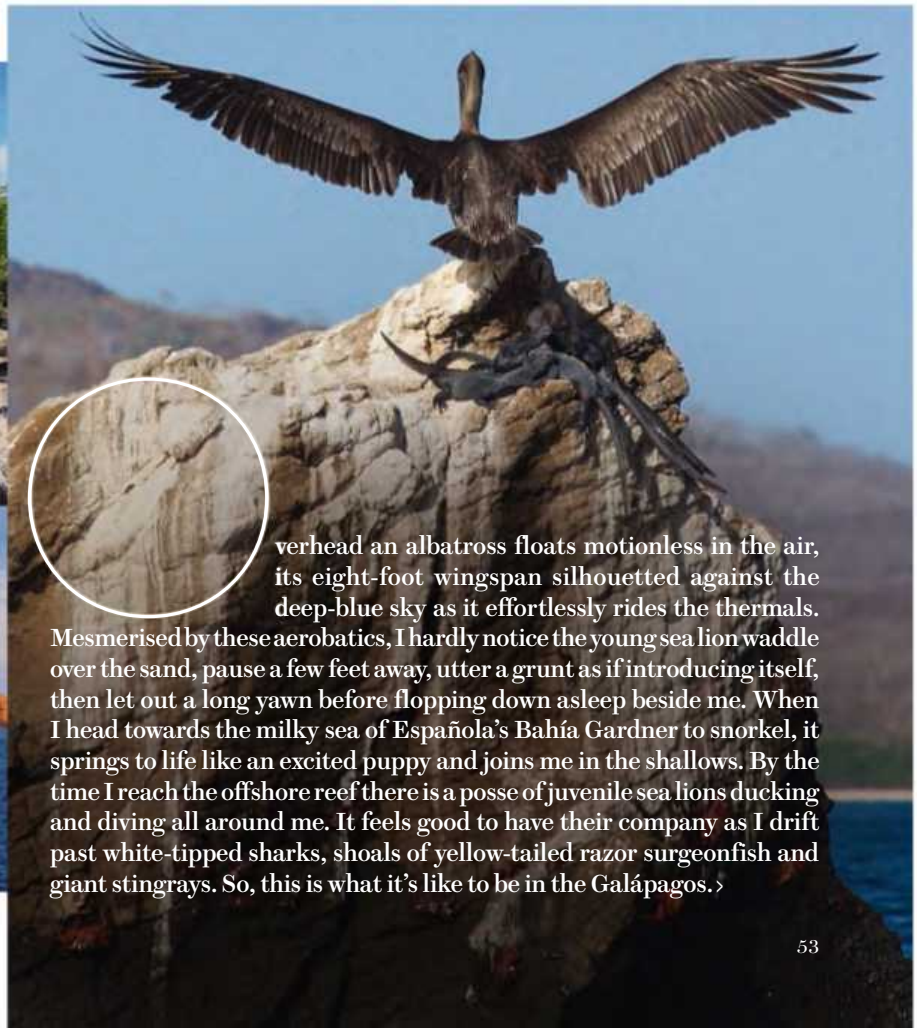
FROM LEFT Marine iguanas bask in the sunshine. Sea lion and pelican on Eden Islet. Blue-footed booby nurturing an egg. Frigatebirds circle a fishing boat off Plaza Sur



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Great frigatebird on North Seymour. Swallow-tailed gull on Plaza Sur. Sea Lions on Española. Land iguana on Plaza Sur. BELOW Marine iguanas on Santa Cruz. Pelican on Eden Islet. Cruising the islands

TO WITNESS THE STRANGE LANDS AND FEARLESS INHABITANTS OF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS IS A DEEPLY HUMBLING EXPERIENCE, AS **CHRIS CALDICOTT** DISCOVERED ON A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXPEDITION CRUISE INTO THE CRUCIBLE OF EVOLUTION





Overhead an albatross floats motionless in the air, its eight-foot wingspan silhouetted against the deep-blue sky as it effortlessly rides the thermals. Mesmerised by these aerobatics, I hardly notice the young sea lion waddle over the sand, pause a few feet away, utter a grunt as if introducing itself, then let out a long yawn before flopping down asleep beside me. When I head towards the milky sea of Española's Bahía Gardner to snorkel, it springs to life like an excited puppy and joins me in the shallows. By the time I reach the offshore reef there is a posse of juvenile sea lions ducking and diving all around me. It feels good to have their company as I drift past white-tipped sharks, shoals of yellow-tailed razor surgeonfish and giant stingrays. So, this is what it's like to be in the Galápagos.›



FROM TOP Bartolomé island. Marine iguanas and a baby heron (below) on Eden Islet off Santa Cruz island. A 'wet' landing on Española on one of the *Silver Galapagos* Zodiacs







'Ok guys, let's make a break for it. Follow me,' announced Juan Carlos, a guide of 35 years' experience, as our Zodiac made a 'dry' landing at Punta Suárez, on the western end of Española island, earlier that morning. The rocks were carpeted in sunbathing marine iguanas, spiky, prehistoric-looking creatures who sprayed us with salt, expelled like a sneeze from glands above their nostrils, as we walked by. Once clear of the shore, we climbed up to the plateau. Far below, waves pounded the coast and blowholes shot water high into the air. All around us, red-billed tropicbirds and swallow-tailed gulls dived for fish, then engaged in spectacular aerial dogfights to avoid being mugged of their prize by gangs of frigatebirds.

From April to December, the plateau is the sole breeding ground for the world's entire population (around 30,000) of waved albatross. Males and females mate for life and take it in turns to sit on their single-egg nests, getting up occasionally to honk and rub their beaks together in a 'kissing dance'. It's a steady hike up to see them and, this being right on the equator, the sun is intense so, even with frequent stops, it is a relief when we set off to swim in the cool waters of Bahía Gardner.

At 3.2 million years, Española is one of the oldest islands in the Galápagos, a volcanic archipelago that straddles the equator, 620 miles off the Pacific coast of Ecuador. At 4,000 million years younger than the mainland, its newest islands are still being formed, as the Nazca plate passes over a hot spot of volcanic activity that erupts through the Earth's crust in lava flows. The resulting sub-marine mountains eventually reach the surface as islands and, as they cool, age and drift, life begins and, eventually, proliferates, creating a living museum of the theory of evolution.

WE TIPTOED THROUGH A MULTITUDE OF PREHISTORIC-LOOKING MARINE IGUANAS AS THEY SPRAYED US WITH SALT EXPELLED LIKE A SNEEZE FROM GLANDS ABOVE THEIR NOSTRILS

Today 97 per cent of the Galápagos is a heavily protected national park with strict limits on who can go where and when. On uninhabited islands, no group larger than 16 is permitted; all must have a registered guide to ensure no-one strays beyond designated pathways; and all landings must be in small rubber boats, or Zodiacs, either 'dry' onto rocks or 'wet' by jumping into the sea and wading ashore. Every island is different depending on its age, landscape and which species of flora and fauna have colonised it, and so, for the broadest experience of this extraordinary diversity, it is advisable to sign up for a cruise that can transport you via Zodiacs to different islands every day.

I chose a seven-night Silversea Expedition cruise out of Baltra on board *Silver Galapagos*, which offers two routes: one sailing west towards the younger islands, with their live volcanoes and an emphasis on marine life, snorkelling and other water-based activities, and the other, the more land-based, north-central route. I opted for the latter. Even though some of the same islands are visited on both voyages, landings are at different locations so some passengers sign up for both cruises one after the other. Landing sites work on a rota system among the 80 or so vessels permitted to carry tourists, to ensure minimum impact on the fragile ecosystems. The wonderful effect of this is to make you feel like you have each and every place to yourself.

Yet, no one seems to have told any of the Galápagos species

about the compulsory two-metres-between-humans-and-wildlife rule: blue- and red-footed boobies at Punta Pitt on San Christóbal and Darwin Bay on Genovesa wobbled over to show-off their lipstick-red and cobalt-blue feet; on North Seymour the bushes were alive with Magnificent frigatebirds displaying inflated pillar-box-red throat glands; inquisitive short-eared owls, also on Genovesa, stared straight into the camera lens; the pink flamingos of Rábida balanced motionless on one leg as we passed. And then there were the sea lions, which were everywhere, forming the welcome committee on every beach and even slumbering on harbour benches in Puerto Baquerizo on San Christóbal, one of two populated islands we visited.

On the slopes of the extinct volcano on Santa Cruz, dandelion seeds, light enough to be delivered on the wind, have taken root and grown without competition into towering forests of Scalesia. Moisture sucked from the gathering clouds drips down their trunks giving life to a tropical Eden of ferns, lichens, orchids and grasses that provide grazing for giant tortoises that weigh up to 250kg and live for up to 170 years. Trekking through this enchanted forest felt like being in a scene from *Gulliver's Travels*. By contrast, in Sullivan Bay on Santiago, I walked over a lifeless field of lava, twisted into surreal rope-shaped patterns worthy of an exhibition at Tate Modern. Even this apparent wilderness had been colonised by clumps of lava cacti and insects.

At the welcome briefing on board *Silver Galapagos*, the head naturalist had announced: 'This is an expedition – we aim to keep you off the boat as much as possible!' Good news, I thought. However, life on board also turned out to be rather wonderful; a floating boutique hotel with butlers, cocktails and canapés, deck-top lunches of grilled giant tiger prawns and zingy ceviches, and gourmet dinners with fresh local fish. It was easy to slip into the routine of early breakfasts before a packed daily programme of Zodiac tours, deep-water snorkelling, kayaking, beach swimming and 'less talking, more walking' treks, all in the company of knowledgeable guides. The daily lectures, on everything from the courtship dance of the blue-footed booby to how the Galápagos inspired Darwin to publish his theory of evolution in *On the Origin of Species*, were unmissable.

SEA LIONS WERE EVERYWHERE: THEY FORMED THE **WELCOME** COMMITTEE ON EVERY BEACH

With a capacity for 100 guests and 74 crew, *Silver Galapagos* is among the largest vessels permitted. My fellow travellers were mostly recently retired Americans, a smattering of Europeans and one family of four generations on the trip of a lifetime. Shorts, T-shirts and good walking sandals were fine for most excursions, while wet suits, snorkelling equipment, waterproof backpacks, water bottles and rubber boots were supplied. The guides all carried binoculars which they were happy share.

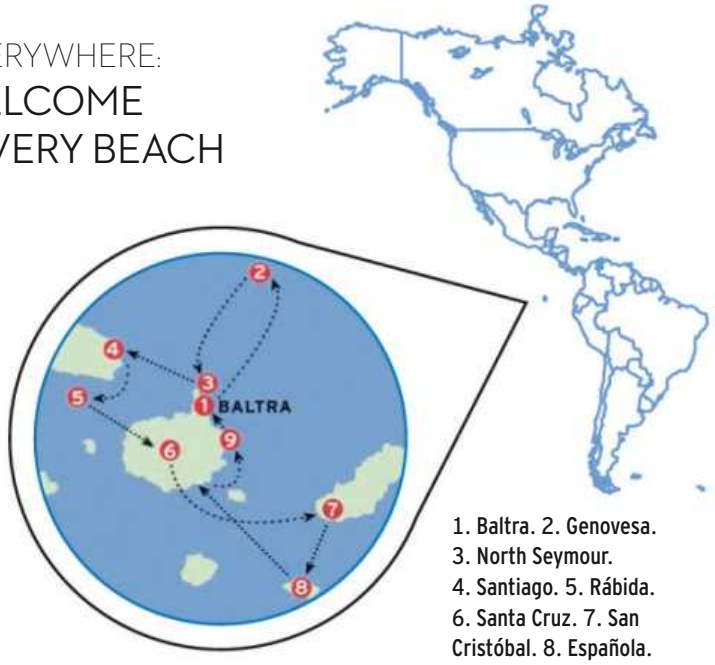
I found my close encounters with the strange and fearless creatures of the Galápagos deeply moving. My most enduring memory is of swimming with the inquisitive sea lion pups – an experience that would melt the heart of even the most world-weary traveller. I left the ship with a heavy heart – but it didn't last. On the short drive to Baltra airport, our bus screeched to a halt: 'Sorry! Land iguana crossing the road,' announced the driver. The mini monster raised its golden head as we passed, as if saluting farewell, then carried on its way.



A blowhole at Punta Suárez, Española. BELOW *Silver Galapagos* in port, and life on board







1. Baltra. 2. Genovesa. 3. North Seymour. 4. Santiago. 5. Rábida. 6. Santa Cruz. 7. San Cristóbal. 8. Española. 9. Plaza Sur

ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO Although the Galápagos has a year-round mild climate, January to May is warmer with calmer seas and less wind but occasional rain; the June to December dry season is cooler with rougher seas.

HOW Silversea Cruises' (0844-251 0833; silversea.com) *Silver Galapagos* offers seven-day round-trip voyages from Baltra year-round. Routes alternate weekly between the western islands and those in the north-central part of the archipelago. Fares start from £6,728pp, including flights and a two-night pre-cruise stay at Casa Gangotena (casagangotena.com) in the Ecuadorian capital, Quito.

5 REGIONS

Best by boat

LIKE THE GALAPAGOS, FOR SOME PLACES ON EARTH ONLY A SHIP WILL DO, SAYS **KATE CROCKETT**



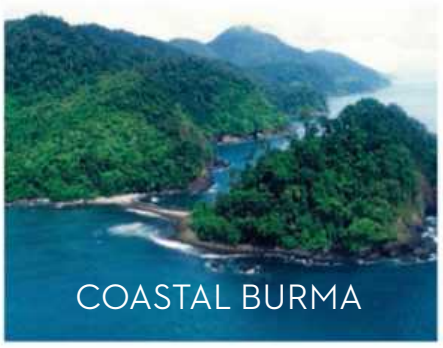
For Kambaraumba village in Papua New Guinea, the Sepik River holds a special importance. The men of its tribe sport tattoos and scars that imitate the scales of the crocodile, a creature they revere. The chance to meet such unique people is the reward for travelling on the country's waterways – truly the best way to discover the culture and wildlife, much of which is hidden in the interior. By boat is also the only way to appreciate PNG's pristine reefs, which offer some of the world's finest diving and snorkelling.

HOW Steppes Travel's (steppestravel.co.uk) 17-day 'Exploratory Adventure Cruise' to Papua New Guinea, with guest naturalist Chris Packham, on *True North* (32 passengers), departs the UK on November 5. From £11,995pp, with flights.



2016 marks the fiftieth anniversary of commercial tourism in Antarctica and the most popular and practical way to see the White Continent is to travel there by ship. Beyond the rite of passage that is the Drake Passage, on the Peninsula itself, cruising enables you to cover great distances through sea ice, surrounded on all sides by icebergs, whales and penguins. As well as your floating hotel, the ship provides the launch for Zodiacs to allow close-up wildlife spotting.

HOW Quark Expeditions (quarkexpeditions.com) offers 11- and 12-day journeys to Antarctica from November to March on three 100-200 passenger ships. From £3,700pp, with flights.



It's the kind of place where you can sail for days and meet no one except for the odd fisherman in a dug-out canoe. A sprinkling of more than 800 mostly-deserted islands in Burma's remote south, the Mergui Archipelago is home to the Moken 'sea gypsies'. It is only accessible by boat, with February and March the best time for snorkelling and diving in clear water on colourful reefs off deserted beaches. If Burma is still new territory for global tourism, then its coast is truly the final frontier.

HOW Pandaw (pandaw.com) offers four new, 11-day voyages to Burma's Mergui Archipelago in February and March 2016 on *MY Drenec* (10 passengers). From £4,995pp with flights, the seven-night cruise and one night in Rangoon.



Bookended by Moscow and St Petersburg, a journey on the Volga (including the Volga-Baltic Waterway and the Svir and Neva rivers), is the most rewarding way to see rural Russia. The cities vanish from your consciousness as the ship cruises into bucolic countryside, past *dachas* and churches. Quiet compared to many European rivers, highlights include Kizhi island World Heritage Site, accessible only by boat, and lakes Ladoga and Onega, the largest in Europe.

HOW Viking River Cruises' (vikingrivercruises.co.uk) 13-day 'Waterways of the Tsars' cruise, on one of three ships (205 passengers), sails May to October and costs from £3,595pp, with flights.



Pack your spirit of adventure and thermals for a summertime departure to the Canadian Arctic to transit the legendary sea route connecting the Pacific and northern Atlantic Oceans through the Arctic. The journey is made possible in August by retreating sea ice, which also reveals a wealth of wildlife, from seal, walrus and birdlife colonies, to big-ticket sightings such as humpback whales. Musk ox may be spotted on shore in Canada and Greenland and, if you're lucky, the occasional polar bear.

HOW Crystal Cruises (crystalcruises.co.uk) sails the Northwest Passage for the first time in 2016, offering a 32-day voyage from Anchorage to New York on board *Crystal Serenity* (1,070 passengers). From £15,494pp, cruise only.



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Experience the future of river cruising and let the treasures of Europe come to you on a fully-inclusive voyage aboard an award-winning Emerald Waterways Star-Ship. Book your 2016 river cruise today and **save up to £1,000 per couple.**



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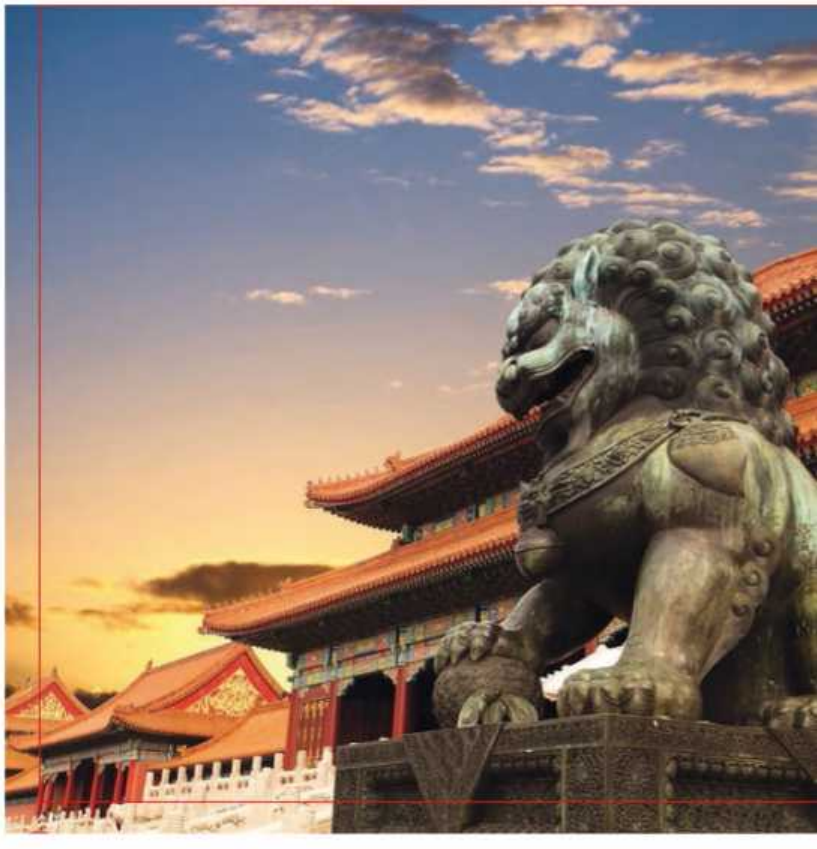
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Terms and Conditions: £1,395 based on 8-day Jewels of the Rhine river cruise departing in April 2016 and includes a saving of £500 per person. Price is based on two sharing a twin cabin, subject to availability and is correct at time of print (October 2015). The up to £1,000 per couple saving is for new bookings only on 2016 river cruises. 1.5% (1.95% for Am Ex) credit card charge will apply. Other T&C's apply, please call for details. For full itineraries and booking conditions, please see our 2016 river cruise brochure or visit www.emeraldwaterways.co.uk.

FREE TO EXPLORE

COMPLIMENTARY EXCURSIONS INCLUDED ON ALL VIKING OCEAN AND RIVER CRUISES ENSURE GUESTS MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY DESTINATION



There is nothing quite like that moment on a cruise when you wake up in the morning and pull back the curtain to see the skyline of a new city from your window. Almost every new day on board a Viking ocean or river cruise begins in a new destination, and it's no coincidence that key landmarks are often just a stone's throw from port. Viking is all about helping you explore the world; delivering you to the most exciting destinations in complete comfort but, most of all, doing everything it can to ensure you make the most of every place you tick off your bucket list. It goes without saying that you'll be made to feel at home on board Viking's fleet of five-star ships, but Viking is also keen to ensure that you and fellow guests disembark and explore the cities around you. To this end, it offers an array of excursions. And, better still, many excursions – including all those featured here – are included in Viking's inclusive price, which means you can explore to your heart's content and not pay a penny extra.



BALTICS & NORTHERN EUROPE

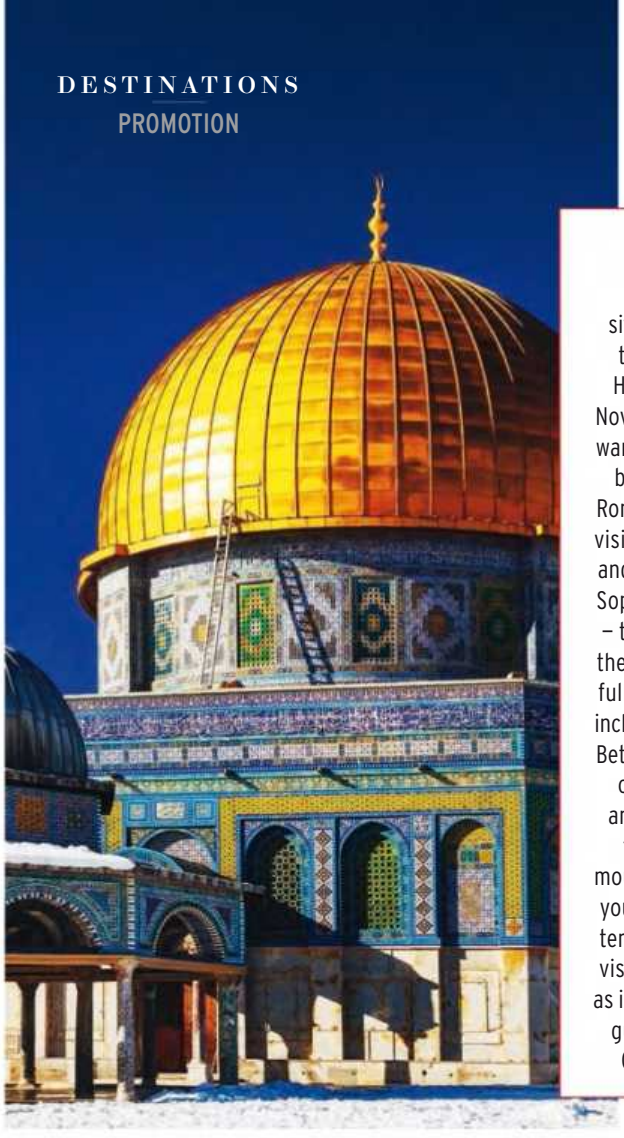
Viking Ocean Cruises offers a host of journeys that embrace the unmissable sights of Scandinavia and the Baltics. A complimentary tour of Tallin's well-preserved Old Town features on journeys to Estonia, while a host of excursions in Norwegian ports ensure guests experience the best of the country whose flag Viking's ships bear. The 15-day 'Into the Midnight Sun' cruise, taking place in June 2016 on board new ship *Viking Sea*, which joins the fleet in April 2016, includes a concert in the cathedral in Bodø in the Arctic Circle, and excursions to the North Cape and to Eagles Bend Overlook on Geirangerfjord (pictured), a Unesco World Heritage Site. Also in the fjords, the 'Viking Homelands' itinerary, offered by *Viking Star* and *Viking Sea* from May to September, includes a walking tour and mountain farm visit near the town of Flåm.





CHINA

In Asia, Viking offers journeys on three of the region's legendary waterways – the Mekong, the Irrawaddy and the Yangtze. The Yangtze cruise, for example, takes in much more than just the Three Gorges: the journey includes all of the country's major highlights, from Beijing to Shanghai, as part of a 13-day tour of the 'Imperial Jewels of China'. In Beijing alone, the itinerary features inclusive excursions to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City (pictured), as well as the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs. There is also the chance to get under the skin of life in the Chinese capital, with a rickshaw ride through the narrow alleyways, known as *hutong*, that weave through the city, plus a visit to one of the traditional courtyard homes that characterise these neighbourhoods.



HOLY LANDS

Exploring the wealth of sacred sites in the Eastern Mediterranean, the 15-day 'Ancient Empires and Holy Lands' cruise, taking place in November 2016 on board *Viking Sea*, warrants special mention. Bookended by comprehensive explorations in Rome and Istanbul – including guided visits to the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Vatican City, and Istanbul's Hagia Sophia and labyrinthine Grand Bazaar – this cruise travels into the heart of the world's major religions over three full days spent in Israel. The itinerary includes visits to Jerusalem (pictured), Bethlehem and Nazareth and includes complimentary excursions to the ancient city of Acre and the chance to ascend Mount Carmel. On the mountain's slope overlooking the city, you can also stroll in the magnificent terraced Hanging Gardens of Haifa. A visit to the Dead Sea is also included, as is a tour with a knowledgeable local guide in Jerusalem – the centre of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.



EUROPEAN RIVERS

With 59 ships on 13 rivers, Viking River Cruises has Europe covered, east to west. From classic journeys on the majestic Rhine and Danube to the less-visited Elbe or the Douro rivers, there is something for everyone, throughout the year. The same goes for the complimentary excursions, of which there are numerous. Highlights include a flamenco performance and lunch in Salamanca for guests on board Douro cruises; dinner and wine tasting in a château for guests in Bordeaux; Beaujolais tasting for those cruising in Southern France; city tours of Buda and Pest in Budapest, as well a chance to see the Hungarian capital's striking parliament building on the riverside (pictured), as part of the Danube itineraries. Additionally, visits to the Meissen porcelain factory and beer tasting at Litomerice are included as part of Viking's 10-day journeys on the 'Elegant Elbe' through Germany and the Czech Republic.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Viking Star and her sister ship *Viking Sea*, which makes its maiden voyage in April, will spend spring, late summer and autumn of 2016 in the Mediterranean cruising classic itineraries such as the 10-day 'Empires of the Mediterranean' journey. The cruise includes no fewer than eight legendary destinations between Venice and Istanbul. Among the included excursions are a visit to the Dominican monastery in Dubrovnik to see its Renaissance paintings, and the opportunity to bathe in thermal springs on the island of Palea Kameni, off the coast of Santorini (pictured). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this desirable journey is a hot ticket, with spring itineraries already sold out – so book now for late summer and autumn.



For more information on Viking cruises and included excursions, or to book, call 0800-652 2469 or visit vikingcruises.co.uk









CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Manicured gardens greet guests at this manor house hotel. AG's Restaurant, led by Executive Chef Darrel Wilde, has three AA Rosettes. Cedar Lodge Suites feature a two-person bath and the majority have a balcony or terrace. Utopia Spa's outdoor hot tub and sauna

ESCAPE TO THE COUNTRY

SET IN 120 ACRES OF SUSSEX COUNTRYSIDE, FIVE-STAR ALEXANDER HOUSE HOTEL AND UTOPIA SPA IS THE QUINTESSENTIALLY ENGLISH RETREAT FOR REST AND RELAXATION

An easy escape from London, Alexander House Hotel and Utopia Spa is a little-known gem and the inviting rural bolthole. This picturesque former manor house, which is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, is a tranquil haven set in 120 acres of manicured gardens and countryside in Sussex. A five-star, 58-room property, complete with an award-winning restaurant and spa, Alexander House is one of the finest hotels outside London. It is also conveniently located for Gatwick airport.

The hotel's extensive Utopia Spa is a destination in its own right, taking guests on a serene personalised journey to relieve the stresses and strains of everyday life. There are 25 treatment rooms, various relaxation lounges and a host of therapists providing revitalising treatments. There's also an outdoor barrel sauna and the newly opened Zen Garden Terrace, with four private cedar hot tubs.

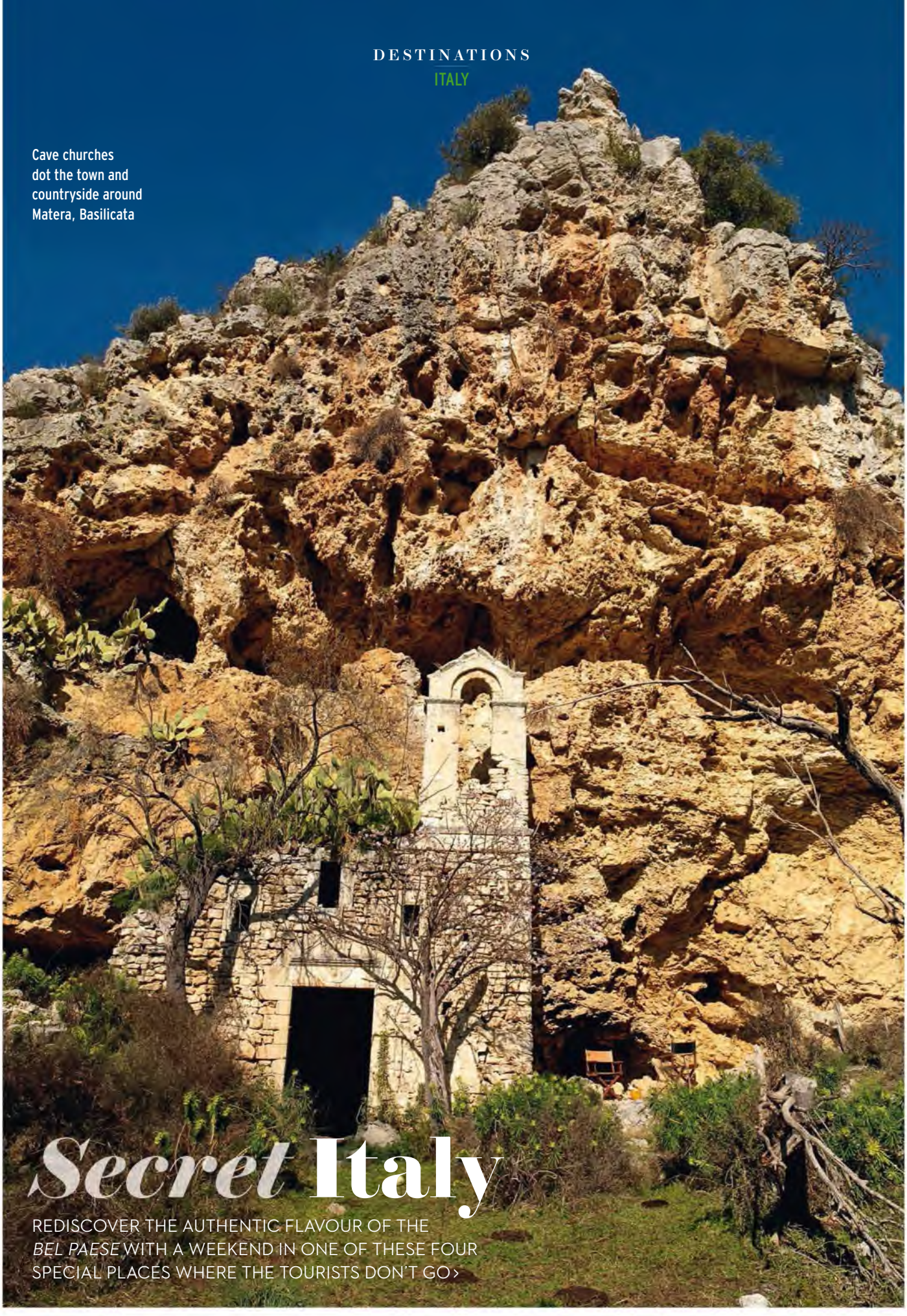
Also newly opened, and further raising the bar, are Alexander House's 19 luxurious Cedar Lodge Suites, many of which feature a private south-facing balcony or terrace overlooking the gardens and countryside. All offer full access to the Utopia Spa and come with a dedicated personal concierge to attend to guests' every need. For those looking for absolute privacy, there is the two-bedroom luxury Gatehouse residence.

As cosseting as Alexander House is, it would be remiss to visit without exploring the impressive grounds and environs. The expansive estate has a tennis court, a croquet lawn, putting green and a giant chess board for summer days, plus year-round bicycle hire and a marked trekking trail. And for those urbanites who left London in a hurry, the helpful staff will even lend a pair of Wellington boots.

READER OFFER

Book two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation and receive a third night complimentary. Only valid when booking online using the promotional code 'house&garden'. Valid February 1–December 30, 2016. Subject to availability.

A stay at Alexander House Hotel costs from £125pp for dinner, bed and breakfast. 01420-714914; alexanderhotels.co.uk



Cave churches dot the town and countryside around Matera, Basilicata

Secret Italy

REDISCOVER THE AUTHENTIC FLAVOUR OF THE *BEL PAESE* WITH A WEEKEND IN ONE OF THESE FOUR SPECIAL PLACES WHERE THE TOURISTS DON'T GO›

SEXTANTIO LE GROTTE DELLA CIVITA

Living with history in Matera, Basilicata



Why, I wondered, as I explored Matera's magical streets, had I taken so long to visit this extraordinary town? I lived in Italy for almost a decade, and have been drawn to the country since the 1980s, but only recently did I head to Basilicata, in the instep of the 'boot', to discover a place that is as captivating as any in Europe.

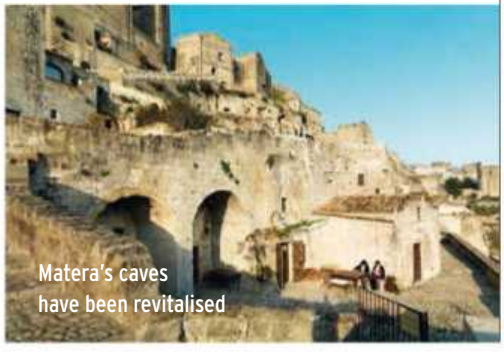
Perhaps it was what I knew by repute, for until the 1950s this was one of Italy's poorest towns, some 20,000 people forced to live in squalor in the *sassi*, a honeycomb of ancient caves beneath Matera's medieval streets. Only in the 1960s was the area cleared and its inhabitants rehoused.

Recently, however, the abandoned caves have been reclaimed, first by squatters and artists, latterly by bars, restaurants and hotels, sparking an extraordinary change in Matera's fortunes. The caves are remarkable – both those that have been reclaimed and those that are eerily empty.

But this would be an enchanting town even without the *sassi*, thanks in part to those magical streets – a labyrinth of tiny alleys and time-worn cobbles – but also to the food and wine you'll find nowhere else (try *stracinate di grano arso*, for example, a pasta with a distinctive nutty flavour) and to the 155 ancient and fresco-swathed *chiese rupestri*, or cave churches, that dot the town and its otherworldly countryside.

WHEN TO GO Visit any time outside the sweltering months of June to September.

HOW Bari airport, 45 minutes away, is served by direct flights from the UK with Ryanair, easyJet and British Airways. Stay at Le Grotte della Civita (sextantio.it), the best of the cave hotels. Doubles from €150, B&B. *Tim Jepson*


Matera's caves have been revitalised

SUNBATHING WITH LOCALS ON THE CONERO RIVIERA, LE MARCHE

From the heights of the coastal road, the views of the cerulean Adriatic Sea are mesmerising. Look down and there are tantalising glimpses of white-pebble beaches fringed by inviting, aquamarine water.

Welcome to the Conero Riviera, a 20km stretch of coast between Ancona and Numana that the Italians would rather keep to themselves. It forms part of the Monte Conero National Park, a verdant spur that protrudes roughly halfway down Le Marche. Forget the overpriced, overcrowded hotspots of the west coast, this is where to experience an authentically Italian beachside idyll, or as the Italians like to put it, '*La dolce far niente*' – roughly, the sweetness of doing nothing.

The loveliest swathe is between Portonovo and Sirolo, where the forested Monte Conero rises sharply from the sea and the beaches are reached by a series of dizzying bends. The beach at Portonovo is split by the Fortino Napoleonico built by Napoleon to keep English ships at bay and now a novel setting for a hotel, while the nearby Torre de Bosis was built in 1716 by Pope Clemente to protect the coast from Turkish pirates.

Beach clubs line the water's edge and are as Italian a tradition as espresso. As with most things in Italy, it's a family affair with several generations hitting the beach together. But here, even in the height of summer, Italian is the only language you will hear either side of your sunlounger.

As the last of Portonovo's sunbathers wend their way home, deck chairs are packed away and restaurants set up tables on the sand. Every menu features wild mussels, a point of local gastronomic pride, served steamed in their shells or in *paccheri* pasta with tomato and fennel fronds. It's the perfect end to a day at the beach – sweet nothing indeed.

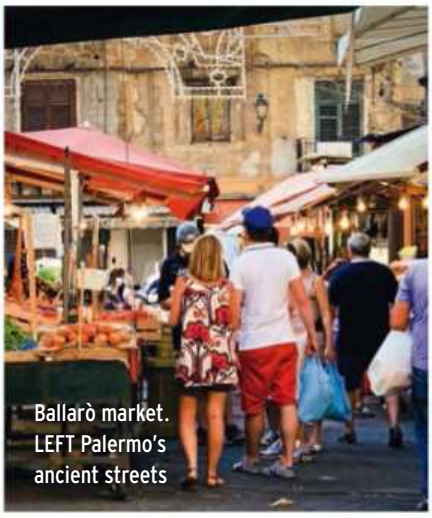
WHEN TO GO May to September.

HOW The Conero Riviera is 30 minutes from Ancona airport, which is served by Ryanair from Stansted. Stay at Hotel Emilia (hotelemilia.com). Doubles from €120, B&B. *Aoife O'Riordain*

ANNA QUAGLIA/ISTOCK; KASTOBO/ISTOCK; ITALIAN TOURIST BOARD; SEXTANTIO LE GROTTE DELLA CIVITA; TIM SLESINGER







Ballarò market. LEFT Palermo's ancient streets

Strolling the crumbling heart of Palermo, Sicily

You never forget Palermo. Long after you return home, the Sicilian capital's dark beauty – half malignant, half sublime – will continue to haunt you. This mysterious city is unlike anywhere else in Europe. It has been colonised by many great civilisations, from the Greeks and Romans to the Byzantines, Arabs and Normans, and that cultural cocktail is reflected in its architecture, food, language and the watchful, heavy-lidded faces that pass you in the street.

To experience the beating heart of Palermo, set aside a morning to wander through one of its three great markets. The guidebooks will tell you to go to the Vucciria. Fascinating as this rotten, crumbling heart of the city still is, Vucciria's market is a shadow of its former self. Ballarò market is where the serious food shopping takes place. Every imaginable foodstuff is here. The meat stalls feature macabre animal heads and strings of hanging intestines. The fruit and vegetable stalls are a blaze of colour and texture. Corrupt-sweet smells – that positive-negative sensation that is so particular to Palermo – permeate the air. And then there's the crowd: housewives haggle; rotund stallholders call out in coarse, gravelly cries; card games take place in grubby corners, and fat stray dogs linger, nosing for titbits.

You could spend an entire weekend exploring Palermo's markets, but it would be a crime to miss its architectural and artistic treasures. They include the jewel-like Palatine Chapel, built in the twelfth century, and Monreale, 20 minutes up the hill by bus, a Norman cathedral whose interiors glisten with heavenly Byzantine mosaics. Sooty Baroque churches dot the streets. My own favourite is the dank, spooky San Matteo on Corso Vittorio Emanuele. And the lovely old Arabic quarter, known as the Kalsa, is home to Palazzo Abatellis, the Regional Gallery of Sicily. Here you will find a painting that, for me, embodies the strange, unknowable nature of this city: Antonello da Messina's *Virgin Annunciate*, painted in the fifteenth century. This hauntingly beautiful Madonna in her lapis veil is dark, earthy, and recognisably human, with all the complexity of experience visible in her wary face. Once seen, never forgotten, just like Palermo.

THE SICILIAN CAPITAL'S DARK BEAUTY – HALF MALIGNANT, HALF SUBLIME – WILL HAUNT YOU

WHEN TO GO September to November and March to June.

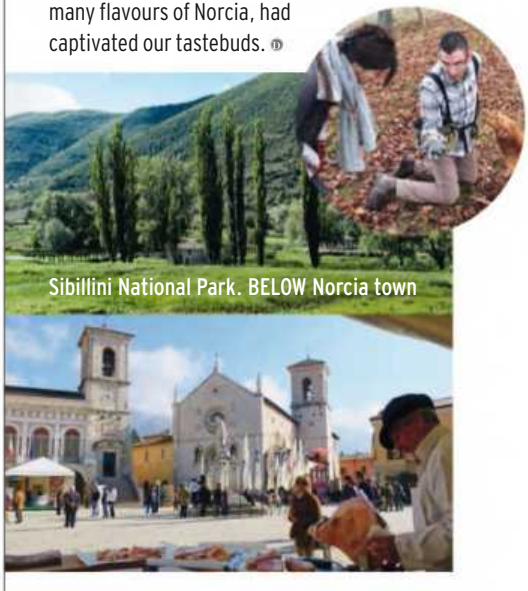
HOW Fly direct to Palermo from Gatwick with easyJet. Stay at BB22 (bb22.it), a tiny but sophisticated B&B in a fifteenth-century palazzo in the old heart of the city. Doubles from €120, B&B. *Kate Quill*

IN SEARCH OF ITALIAN BLACK GOLD IN NORCIA, UMBRIA

Three years without so much as a weekend away without our three girls is a long time; therefore, we chose our destination – Norcia in Umbria, a medieval walled city in the foothills of the Sibillini Mountains – carefully. High on the wish list were Norcia's culinary attractions: delicate prosciutto, cheeses and lentils from Castelluccio di Norcia in the national park. We timed our trip to coincide with truffle season.

Fortified with a breakfast of truffled omelette and Prosciutto di Norcia, we set off in the autumn mist in search of *melanosporum Vittadini*. Our transport was an unprepossessing Fiat and our guide Stefano (inset, below) wore an intriguing fisherman's-style jacket with all sorts of pockets and loops for tools. His marmalade mongrel Brigante ran ahead down the track, either side of which were the gnarly oak roots that host the prize tubers we were here for. Our fears of not finding anything proved unfounded within minutes, as Brigante unearthed one black nugget after another in the damp earth. We sniffed, handled and sized-up each one before it went into the jacket.

Back at Palazzo Seneca, the 24-room hotel owned by the Bianconi family that was home for the weekend, the chef at restaurant Vespasia served the best Italian food we have ever tasted. We departed three days later laden with (vacuum-sealed) truffles, lentils, prosciutto and the Bianconis' own olive oil, which, like the many flavours of Norcia, had captivated our tastebuds.



Sibillini National Park. BELOW Norcia town

WHEN TO GO Norcia's truffle-hunting season is October to March, with the top tuber, *melanosporum Vittadini*, found from December.

HOW Norcia is a two-hour drive from Rome or Ancona. Stay at Palazzo Seneca (palazzoseneca.com). Doubles from €200, B&B. *Kate Slesinger*



INSPIRED ADVENTURES

PIONEERS OF SOFT ADVENTURE TRAVEL, ABERCROMBIE & KENT CONTINUES TO OPEN UP A WORLD OF EXCITING DESTINATIONS AND EXPERIENCES, DELIVERED BY THE FINEST LOCAL, SPECIALIST GUIDES

Hanoi – a bicycle-crazy city in a country where two wheels are king. Where better to begin a leisurely pedal-powered adventure and get under the skin of everyday life in Vietnam?

Abercrombie & Kent has a reputation for pioneering soft adventure travel. What started more than 50 years ago as a simple safari operator, taking guests on journeys through East Africa, is now a global specialist offering tailor-made travel experiences and new perspectives in every conceivable destination, from stargazing in the Atacama Desert to fly-drive touring in New England and cycling in rural Vietnam. Add to this A&K's private villa and chalet collection, inspired family holiday portfolio, cruising and private jet journeys, and A&K's world becomes your oyster.

The 'Vietnam Cycling Tour' is a fine example of what A&K does so well – embracing an intriguing destination in a manner that is accessible and culturally immersive, where soft adventure is balanced with soft linens in fine hotels. As with all A&K itineraries, the Vietnam tour, with highlights including cycling in Hanoi's historic Old Quarter and through paddy fields near Hoi An, can be tailored to a client's own needs and timescale.

With the same commitment to creating lasting memories, A&K offers many more enticing activity-led holidays, each of which can be tailored and often include exclusive experiences or access. A cruise on the Nile, for example, includes a visit to the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens, which has been closed to the wider public since 1950; while the

READER OFFER

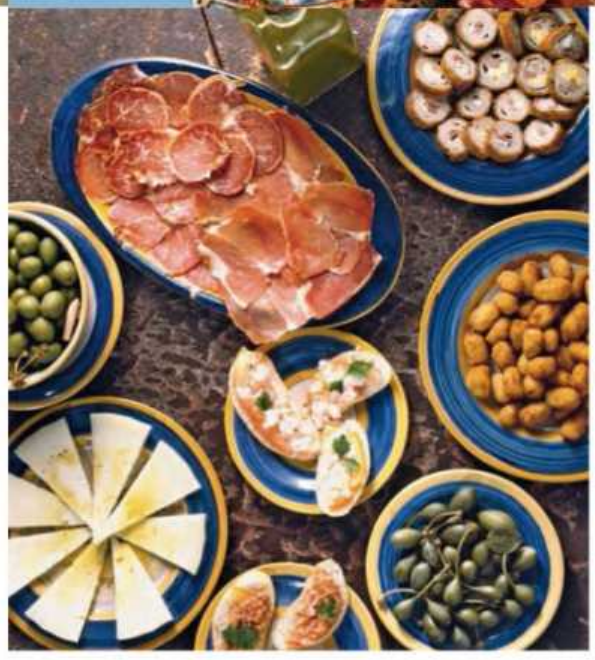
Book an Abercrombie & Kent holiday before February 29, 2016 and receive complimentary airport transfers. For more details, visit abercrombiekent.co.uk/houseandgarden













JUST REWARDS

Travellers can now collect Avios when booking a holiday or renting a villa or chalet with Abercrombie & Kent. Members of British Airways Executive Club, Avios Travel Rewards Programme or Iberia Plus earn two Avios for every £1 spent with Abercrombie & Kent.*

*Avios are issued and redeemed in accordance with Avios terms and conditions. Avios cannot be collected on air taxes, surcharges, breakage deposits, insurance and credit card charges. For full terms and conditions see abercrombiekent.co.uk/avios

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
Get under the skin of a country with an activity-led holiday such as the 'Vietnam Cycling Tour'. A Nile cruise is the perfect way to see Egypt's ancient and pleasingly crowd-free sites. Peru is increasingly accessible, with new direct flights to Lima with British Airways from June. A&K's 'Highlights of China' itinerary features Shanghai. Gastronomic gem and European City of Culture 2016, San Sebastián and the Italian city of Florence are popular city breaks

five-day 'Classic Russia' tour, to Moscow and St Petersburg, includes a rare out-of-hours peek inside the Peterhof Palace. Such compelling city breaks are much in demand and A&K has responded with more thoughtful ideas such as European art escapes, wine tasting in Porto and *bacari* tours of Venice.

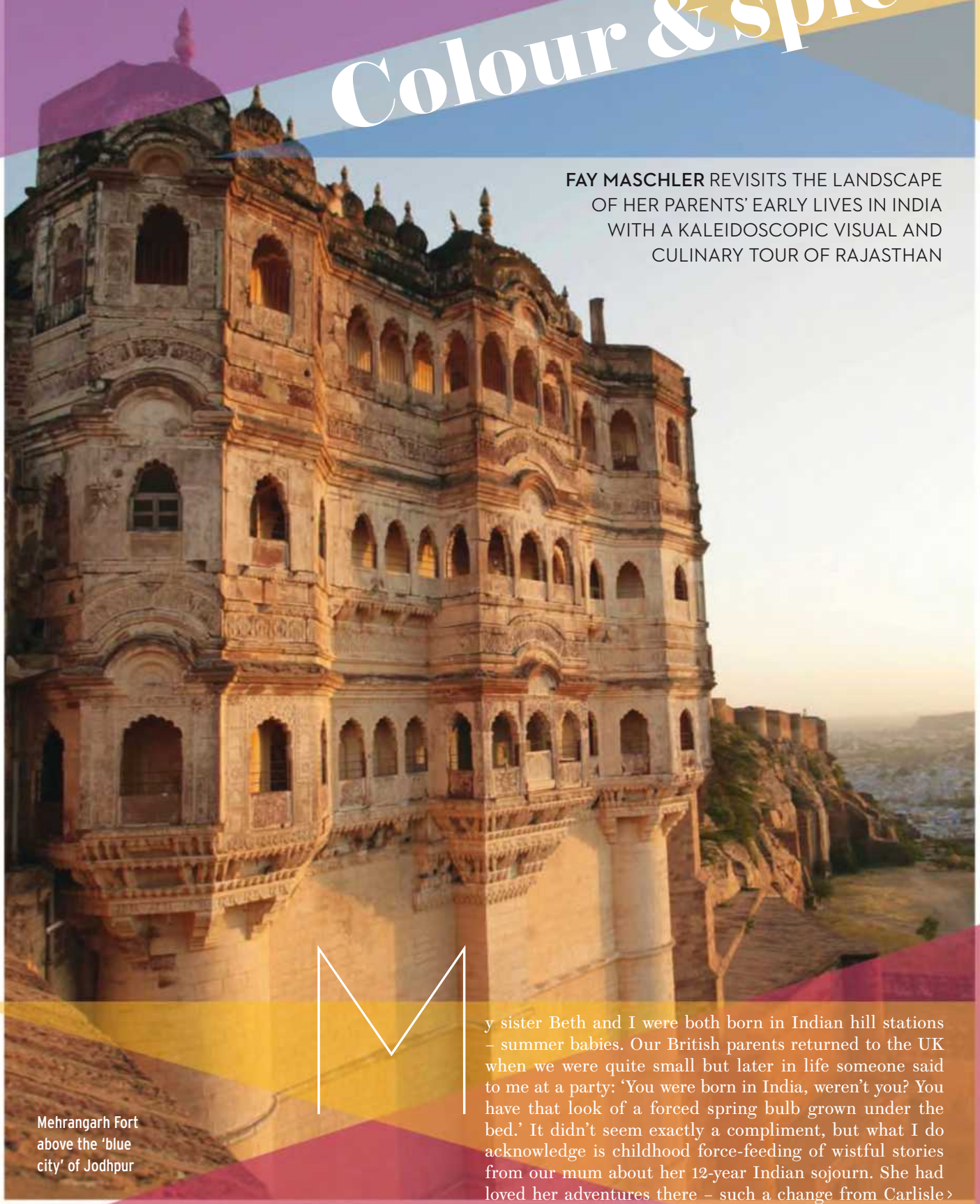
But A&K's roots are not forgotten: it remains the go-to specialist for African safari, be that a great-value first-time safari embracing the best of South Africa – such as Cape Town, the Kalahari and Sabi Sands in the Kruger – or a *mokoro* adventure in the Okavango Delta in Botswana which, like every other A&K experience, is tailor-made just for you.

For more information, call 01242-546625 or visit abercrombiekent.co.uk


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Colour & spice

FAY MASCHLER REVISITS THE LANDSCAPE OF HER PARENTS' EARLY LIVES IN INDIA WITH A KALEIDOSCOPIC VISUAL AND CULINARY TOUR OF RAJASTHAN



Mehrangarh Fort above the 'blue city' of Jodhpur

My sister Beth and I were both born in Indian hill stations – summer babies. Our British parents returned to the UK when we were quite small but later in life someone said to me at a party: 'You were born in India, weren't you? You have that look of a forced spring bulb grown under the bed.' It didn't seem exactly a compliment, but what I do acknowledge is childhood force-feeding of wistful stories from our mum about her 12-year Indian sojourn. She had loved her adventures there – such a change from Carlisle ›



FROM LEFT Inside Mehrangarh Fort. Night views of Jodhpur from the Fort

– and had responded more creatively than the average memsahib to what was on offer; learning a bit of Hindi, accompanying the cook to the bazaar to buy food, using the sensual fabrics to great effect in many houses as she moved about the vast country.

Her anecdotes were tedious to a child's ear. An erratic use of Hindi words for certain household objects when overheard by our school friends could make us squirm. Arriving in Jodhpur, the first stop on a recent short tour of Rajasthan that Beth and I were making together – in part a pilgrimage to recollected memories of our parents – the rush of shame was revisited.

Mummy had insisted on calling those trousers with a snug fit from calf to ankle that we wore for riding lessons 'joad-purs' (following the correct local pronunciation), while Audrey, our riding teacher whom we worshipped unreservedly, called them 'jod-purs'. How callow youth can be. Now – on this visit to Rajasthan's second city where my parents had lived and about which I had heard so much – I wished I had listened to my late mother more attentively and asked lots of questions.

Jodhpur is an extraordinary place: its fifteenth-century Mehrangarh Fort – built, according to Kipling, by 'angels, fairies and giants' – hovers over the city and invades your consciousness. Eyes are constantly drawn up to its singular mix of fragility and intimidation, and houses on the hillside below painted Brahmin blue are like a beautiful skirt drawn decorously around.

Raas boutique hotel in the old city, once the home of a *thakur* (nobleman), where we stayed for the first three nights, has employed the red sandstone that is the traditional building block here with a modern sensibility in graphic *jaali* screens. The pool is an oasis as you leave behind the clamour of Sardar Market and the terrace of the elevated Darikhana restaurant seems almost on a hand-holding relationship with the Fort.

The shadow of the Clock Tower overlooking the bazaar is a place to consider the resilience of your digestion. The Chouhan Omelette Shop and Shri Mishrilal Hotel, manufacturers of 'World Fame Makhaniya Lassi (yogurt drink)', are endorsed by guidebooks and considered reasonably safe and, in the case of the lassi, absolutely delicious. Generally, unless it is fished from roiling, boiling oil, other street food is not advised for Westerners. Beth and I felt mildly intrepid leaving Raas to walk to Indique restaurant situated on the roof of the hotel Pal Haveli. Climbing the many steps is rewarded with a fabulous panoramic view, good food, and waiters in orange turbans entering into the idea that an evening out should be fun.

'Home is where you find the best cooking' is a truism about India that can be vexatious if you have no friends there. A rather delightful solution is a cookery lesson at a homestay, such as that offered by Chandrashekhar and Bhavna Singh in their Jodhpur house decorated with portraits of Maharajah relatives. Charming Bhavna demonstrates various dishes, and gives out recipes and a shiny metal box for spices to take home. The resulting lunch en famille concluded with halva. 'Making all Indian desserts is cumbersome,' pronounced her husband.



FROM LEFT Jodhpur Clock Tower. Chillies for sale in the bazaar. Raas hotel. The Chouhan Omelette Shop



FROM LEFT Samode Haveli's hand-painted dining room and exterior. Dishes from Bukhara in Delhi

Palaces owned by Maharajahs, before a democratised India withdrew their privileges and stipends, have almost invariably become hotels – a sort of natural justice. Samode Haveli in Jaipur is one, although the family still inhabit a part of it. It is a sprawling architectural assembly, reached by an elephant ramp, with a patina of life lived well. One of the sons, Yadavendra Singh, takes particular interest in food, especially the traditional recipes of Rajasthan. The elegant hand-painted dining hall is the place to try *junglee maans*, a powerful spicy mutton curry and *murgh ka soweta*, in which pounded sweetcorn and buttermilk add a singular flavour to the chicken.

A change of pace at lunchtime, maybe after an elephant ride up to the Amer Fort, can be had in the bustling vegetarian LMB restaurant – in the heart of the city since 1727 – where the thali is a wonder of culinary ingenuity. A more refined and non-vegetarian thali was served at dinner at Suján Rajmahal Palace, restored under the aegis of Rajmata Padmini Devi of Jaipur. Her determination to 'embrace the future with quiet resilience' has become a riot of flamboyant overkill; brilliant.

I tried to tease out of my memory tales of Delhi from my mother, where she must have marvelled at the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid mosque and the Old Delhi Bazaar just as Beth and I did. As someone who grew up to make a career in writing about food I can with confidence say to eat the best of the city go to both Bukhara in the ITC Maurya Hotel for North-West Frontier kebabs that redefine that word and to Indian Accent at The Manor Hotel in Friends Colony, a quiet congenial place to stay. Here, chef-patron Manish Mehrotra takes Indian food in a completely new direction using subtlety and daring, wit and whimsy in a parade of extraordinary small dishes. It is a culinary way of saying that life in India will never stop evolving.

'GENERALLY, UNLESS IT IS FISHED FROM ROILING, BOILING OIL, **STREET FOOD IS NOT ADVISED** FOR WESTERNERS'





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Homestay host and cook Bhavna Singh. Making bread. Vegetarian thali

CHRIS CALDICOTT; FAY MASCHLER

ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO The best time to travel to India is from October until the end of March, after the summer monsoon, when the climate is mild. However, insiders go to Rajasthan at the end of August or September when the landscape is lush and green and off-peak prices are available.

HOW A seven-night journey through Rajasthan, staying at Raas in Jodhpur (raasjodhpur.com), Samode Haveli (samode.com) in Jaipur and The Manor in Delhi (themanordelhi.com), costs from £1,953pp including flights, private driver, activities and guides, with Original Travel (020-3393 4824; originaltravel.co.uk). UK passport holders need a visa to travel to India. A new e-Tourist visa is now available; apply at least four days before travel. For details, visit indianvisaonline.gov.in



Touching the *sky*

SYBIL KAPOOR JOURNEYS THROUGH THE ANCIENT TOWNS AND LOFTY LANDSCAPES OF YUNNAN IN SOUTH-WEST CHINA, FROM LIJIANG TO ZHONGDIAN – THE LEGENDARY SHANGRI-LA. PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MARK PARREN TAYLOR**



A couple dressed for pre-wedding photographs walk through an alleyway lined with traditional storehouses in Longquan Village, near Lijiang. RIGHT Pretty historic watercourses criss-cross Lijiang's Old Town



The fictional lamasery Shangri-La in James Hilton's book *Lost Horizons* has a powerful hold on travellers' imaginations. So strong is its draw that in 2001 the Chinese government took the unusual step of renaming Zhongdian, a remote town in the Tibetan highlands of north-west Yunnan, Shangri-La. Their aim was to stimulate tourism. How could it fail? Snuggled beside the breathtaking beauty of the Three Parallel Rivers Region National Park – a Unesco World Heritage Site, surrounded by snow-capped mountains, glacial lakes and ancient monasteries – it's impossible to resist the lure of their Shangri-La.

Today, many visitors start their journey through Yunnan in Lijiang, another Unesco World Heritage Site. A spectacular six-hour drive from Shangri-La, we found starting in Lijiang helped to avoid altitude sickness, as it is a mere 2,400m above sea level compared to Shangri-La's 3,300m.

Old Lijiang is very pretty and very lively. Around eight million tourists (mainly Chinese), all intent on fun, visit its picturesque narrow cobbled streets each year. The air is filled with the spicy scent of Sichuan peppercorns and grilled yak kebabs. Music and laughter drift from the teahouses that line the town's flower-bedecked bubbling streams.

Amidst the festive atmosphere, it is hard to appreciate Lijiang's remoteness. Centuries ago, the town was a staging post on the ›



tea-horse road. In exchange for horses, men carried the highly prized Yunnan Pu'er tea – compact, fermented dried black tea cakes – through the high passes of the Himalayas to Tibet.

The entire region is home to 25 different ethnic groups, including the Naxi, Yi and Tibetan people. Many still wear traditional tribal clothing. Both nearby Báisha and Longquan Village (also known as Shùhé Old Town) are ancient centres of Naxi culture. Traditionally, they followed a shamanistic religion called Dongba.

On the drive from Lijiang to Zhongdian (Shangri-La), we, like everyone else, stopped at the spectacular Tiger Leaping Gorge where the Jinsha River, a thunderous muddy tributary to the upper Yangtze River, roars down a series of rapids through a deep, narrow gorge at the foot of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and Haba Snow Mountain. The sound is deafening and the feeling oppressive yet thrilling as vast cliffs, some 2,000 metres high, tower above, in one of the deepest canyons in the world. ›









FROM TOP Historic Fuxing Chang Teahouse near Xinying Street and the 'Big Stone Bridge' close to the heart of Lijiang Old Town. The picturesque central pond and pagoda at Banyan Tree Lijiang



FROM ABOVE LEFT Pu'er tea tasting and wrapped cakes of Pu'er tea at Fuxing Chang Teahouse. Making Yunnan rice noodles in traditional copper pans in Zhongyi Market, both in Lijiang



ABOVE Naxi people meet up in Lijiang's Black Dragon Pool Park to perform traditional (and some reinvented) Naxi dances. RIGHT Tiger Leaping Gorge

AT TIGER LEAPING GORGE A MUDDY TRIBUTARY OF THE YANGTZE ROARS THROUGH A SERIES OF RAPIDS

As the road continues up into the mountains, the landscape changes from terraced fields, orchards and hamlets to bare rocks, waterfalls and mountain pines. Tibetan stupas, with their fluttering prayer flags, start to punctuate the precarious bends in the road. Sturdy white Tibetan farmhouses with intricate painted doors replace mud-brick Naxi houses and white single-storey Yi farms. And then, just when we felt we might touch the sky, we caught sight of Zhongdian, on a rolling plateau, dotted with lakes. In the older part of the town, the golden roofs of Songzanlin Monastery – the largest Buddhist monastery in Yunnan – glint in the evening light.

Stepping out of the car and up through its steep, winding streets, one has to pause to catch one's breath because the air is so thin. The sound of yak bells carries across the meadows and mist creeps over the barley ricks. It is impossible not to gaze in wonder at the beauty of the view: it looks and feels like Tibet, which it was before the government redrew the borders in 1951.

It takes time to explore the vast temple complex of Zhongdian and wander its winding streets while snacking on fresh walnuts but, before long, the mountains beckon further exploration. We drive out past forests, festooned in lichen, with plum-coloured birds perched on telephone wires, before arriving at the Tibetan village of Benzilan. Everyone is out farming. Pigs snuffle and chickens scratch along its dusty roads, unbothered by us peering through the ornate doorways into courtyards filled with freshly harvested corn, maize and chillies.

The white peaks tempt us higher and higher into the mountains until at last we reach the seventeenth-century Dongzhulin Monastery, which feels as though it is floating above a deep valley. Inside, Hindu gods sit alongside Buddhist statues and shamanistic paintings cover the walls. Outside, ravens float on thermal currents and the wind plays the temple bells. We linger a while longer. As Hilton's hero discovered, this is a place that tempts you to stay forever.

THE SOUND OF YAK BELLS CARRIES ACROSS THE MEADOWS AND MIST CREEPS OVER THE BARLEY RICKS







TOP Napa Lake and grasslands, with Zhongdian (Shangri-La) in the distance. ABOVE Songzanlin Monastery in Zhongdian with Lhamo Yangtso Lake in the foreground

INSETS, FROM TOP A Tibetan woman in Conggulong Village, near Zhongdian. A jug for making butter tea at Lop San Mundup's studio in Nixi Village. Zhongdian Old Town



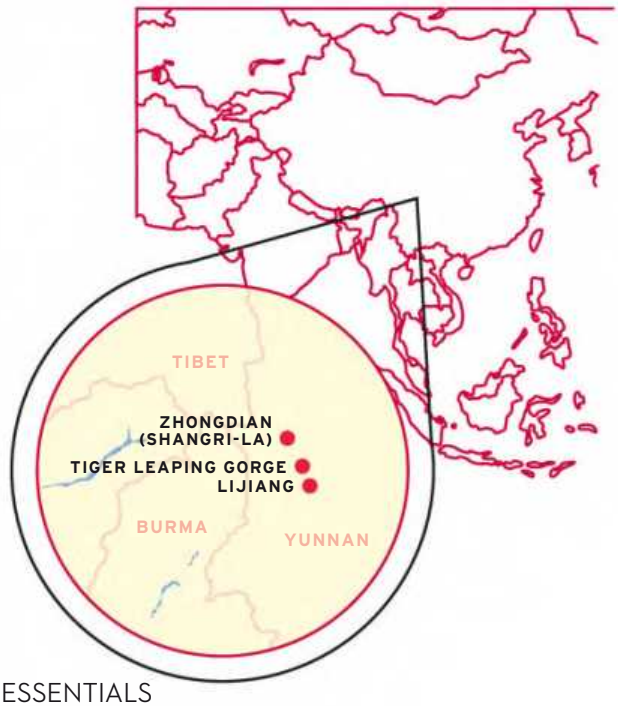






TOP RIGHT A Tibetan woman makes her clockwise circumambulation of Dongzhulin Monastery in Benzilan. ABOVE A monk spends a reflective moment in the school at the monastery

INSETS, FROM TOP Traditional doorway decoration, Benzilan. Window detail at Songzanlin Monastery in Zhongdian. Wooden biscuit container known as a *bare*, at Deqin Yishi Tibetan Culture Shop in Benzilan



ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO April and May are the best time for spring flowers, and October and November for clear days and autumn colour. Avoid the rainy season through the summer.

HOW Abercrombie & Kent (01242-547704; abercrombiekent.co.uk) offers a 12-day 'Landscapes of Yunnan' itinerary, including Lijiang and Zhongdian from £4,880pp, including flights, transfers, private guide and accommodation at Banyan Tree Lijiang (banyantree.com) and /or Amandayan (aman.com), which opened in February in Lijiang, and the Shangri-La Hylandia (shangri-la.com), which opened in August in Zhongdian. Subject to availability.



VILLAS







THE FINEST VILLAS AND PRIVATE RESIDENCES TO SHARE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE THE MARCH ISSUE OF
HOUSE & GARDEN, ON SALE FEBRUARY 1, 2016

PRODUCED BY
BESPOKE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: VILLA BAYVIEW, COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE FROM A&K VILLAS; JAGGED EDGE, QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND FROM ULTRAVILLA; BASTIDE DE LA PAIX, PROVENCE, FRANCE FROM RED SAVANNAH; VILLA MELANIE, POLLENCA, MALLORCA FROM SIMPSON TRAVEL



Double take

TWO LODGES THAT EMBRACE THE LANDSCAPES OF KRUGER, SOUTH AFRICA AND BENGUERRA ISLAND, MOZAMBIQUE COMBINE TO MAKE THE IDEAL SAFARI-BEACH ESCAPE, SAYS **PAMELA GOODMAN**





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The private villa at Azura and the lodge's pristine beach on Benguerra Island. Lions are a rewarding sight in Timbavati on the edge of the Kruger. One of Makanyi's distinctive thatched lodges

Aficionados will tell you that there's something rather special about Timbavati – and they wouldn't be wrong. After decades of poor land management this private nature reserve on the western edge of the Kruger has been making a steady comeback as an area of pristine wilderness. It's a work in progress, of course, but for discerning safari goers, this is a region where the dedication of landowners and rangers yields a very authentic bush experience. Makanyi, converted from a private estate, opened as a seven-room lodge in June and it's a triumph of enthusiastic management and beautiful design. The rooms are thatched and cavernous with sumptuous bathrooms, four-poster beds, sitting rooms and open fires – all smart colonial in feel. The main building is even more inviting, its space cleverly divided between sitting, reading, drinking and dining with a huge adjoining deck beyond which all manner of wildlife trundles past. No matter if you have to work a little harder to see the animals than somewhere like game-rich Sabi Sands. This place isn't about ticking boxes, it's about living and breathing the landscape and, for that, each experience feels a little special, be it bush pancakes cooked in the wild at dawn, tracking lions which, when you find them, have a nervous edginess that's often missing in more commercial areas, or stargazing adventures. And when your waiter hugs you goodbye at the end of your stay, you feel blessed by genuine African warmth.

TOP TIP If you are travelling with children through South Africa or visiting the country for a holiday, you will need to take original birth certificates (copies not allowed) for each child under the age of 18. Presentation of these will be asked for at UK airport check-in desks (as well as on arrival into SA) and those families without relevant certificates will be prevented from boarding the plane.

So on to Mozambique and the southern Bazaruto archipelago, which twins perfectly with the Kruger for that fly and flop, safari/beach combination. Few experiences can compare to the 10-minute helicopter transfer from Vilanculos on the mainland, across the translucent waters of the Mozambique Channel to Benguerra Island and Azura. Forget shoes, this is sand-between-your-toes stuff where, although each room (there are 18) comes with a private pool and a 'butler', the vibe is far more informal than this might suggest. The billowy, breezy atmosphere is punctuated by colourful decorative touches (check out the wonderful beaded fish hanging from the ceiling in the restaurant and lobby) yet the eye is drawn ever outwards to the immense, shifting seascape. The tidal range in front of Azura is huge – sometimes there's sea, sometimes there's not – but there are always amazing boat trips to be had – diving, snorkelling, picnicking on deserted beaches, dune climbing and elusive pansy-shell hunting. Or you can saddle up and go for a ride or take an island tour by jeep on labyrinthine sandy paths, which weave through primitive settlements of waving children. Benguerra is the kind of place where the simplest memories are the best – the glint of a colourful dhow in the sunset, the impossible blue of the sea, the songs of the fishermen cooking their catch on the beach and the freshest of seafood served each night beneath a shimmering galaxy of African stars.

WHEN TO GO You can visit the Kruger area all-year round but to catch Mozambique's weather at its best, this itinerary is ideal between May and October.

HOW An 11-night trip for two with Cazenove + Loyd (020-7384 2332; cazloyd.com), including one night in Johannesburg, three at Makanyi (makanyi lodge.com) and five at Azura (azura-retreats.com) costs from £4,545pp, with flights and transfers.

The call of the *wild*



WHERE A landlocked country in southern Africa with two defining features: the Okavango Delta and Kalahari Desert.

WHY The combination of water-based (Delta) and land-based (desert) experiences is what sets Botswana apart. In addition to game viewing, the bird life is exceptional. This is perhaps the most exclusive country (particularly in terms of price) in the region.

WHEN The dry season, from April to October, is the best time to visit, which conveniently coincides with the Delta in full flood (it takes four months or so for the wet season rains of the Angola Highlands to drain into the Delta).

WHAT'S NEW Following an almost total rebuild, Belmond Eagle Island Lodge (belmond.com) has just reopened in the Okavango Delta, with 12 luxurious tents and a private island setting.

DON'T MISS The Moremi Game Reserve – on the eastern side of the Delta – is Botswana's wildlife hot spot, particularly for big cats.

EDITOR'S TIP One of the most exhilarating land experiences is an overnight trip to the great Makgadikgadi salt pan, based out of Jack's Camp. Venture there and back on quad bikes and sleep open air under the stars.

HOW Abercrombie & Kent (01242-547760; abercrombiekent.co.uk) specialises in tailor-made holidays worldwide, including safaris.



WHERE A coastal East African country, divided by the Great Rift Valley.

WHY Kenya is the true home of the safari, the biggest draw being the Masai Mara National Reserve. Despite the appalling terrorist antics of al-Shabaab, now, in many ways, is the perfect time to go, with fewer tourists and lodges offering special rates. Kenya's safari areas are not under threat and the coastal resorts of Mombasa, Kilifi, Watamu and Diani are also free from FCO restrictions.

WHEN Kenya can be visited year round, though there are heavy rains in April and May. August and September is peak time for the wildebeest migration.

WHAT'S NEW Breaking with the traditional format of the East African safari camp, and set on an escarpment overlooking the Mara, Angama (angama.com) is a sensational new lodge comprising two camps each with 15 partially tented suites and views to make you weep.

DON'T MISS The migration is Kenya's most famous natural sight but, for excellent rhino viewing, head to Laikipia where there are eight private sanctuaries.

EDITOR'S TIP At Lewa Wilderness (lewawilderness.com), near the base of Mount Kenya, climb aboard Will Craig's yellow biplane for one of the country's greatest scenic experiences.

HOW Africa Travel (020-7843 3587; africatravel.com) specialises in holidays to eastern and southern Africa.



WHERE A landlocked country in southern Africa, with fabulous game viewing and, of course, the sensational Victoria Falls.

WHY After years of political and economic turmoil, Zimbabwe is re-emerging as one of the great safari destinations of Africa. It's also one of the best value: holidays in Zimbabwe can cost about two-thirds less than in neighbouring Botswana and Zambia. Zim boasts some of the best-trained guides in Africa.

WHEN Go between May and October (the Falls, however, are more impressive in May and June, following the rains).

WHAT'S NEW The new, multi-million-dollar international airport at Victoria Falls is due for completion imminently. Meanwhile, Wilderness Safaris (wilderness-safaris.com) has recently opened Linkwasha, a nine-tented luxury camp in a private concession within Hwange National Park.

DON'T MISS White-water rafting down the Zambezi (mid-July to mid-Jan) followed by afternoon tea at the Victoria Falls Hotel – one of the great Zim institutions.

EDITOR'S TIP For the ultimate safari experience, book the Matusadona Safari Cruiser on Lake Kariba. This lavish houseboat can accommodate seven guests and comes with two tenders and a speedboat for game viewing and fishing.

HOW Red Savannah (01242-787800; redsavannah.com) offers tailor-made holidays and villas worldwide.

OLYWEN EVANS; MIKE MYERS

HOUSE & GARDEN'S TRAVEL EDITOR **PAMELA GOODMAN** GOES IN SEARCH OF WHAT'S NEW IN SIX OF AFRICA'S TOP SAFARI DESTINATIONS AND GIVES HER ADVICE ON WHAT NOT TO MISS IN 2016



WHERE South-west Africa, distinguished by a long Atlantic desert coastline.

WHY Predominantly malaria free, Namibia is less about big game and more about outstanding natural beauty, desolate wilderness and escapism. Forty per cent of land is in conservation (more than any other country in the world) and 20 per cent of the world's cheetahs exist here. It's also a great destination for self-drive adventures.

WHEN April to October is the best time to visit, with the shoulder season of May and June being the best value. Keen photographers should go in March and April for clear skies and perfect light.

WHAT'S NEW Namibia Exclusive (namibia-exclusive.com) is a group of four, new luxury lodges (two still under construction) located in remote rural locations throughout the country.

DON'T MISS Serra Cafema Camp (wilderness-safaris.com) on the Kunene River on the Namibian/Angolan border – one of the most exclusive and remote destinations in Africa. And Sossusvlei – the highest sand dunes in the world.

EDITOR'S TIP Book a tailor-made mobile camping safari where tents are erected in a new location each night. Four nights, incorporated within a larger Namibian itinerary, is the perfect length.

HOW Journeys by Design (01273-623790; journeysbydesign.com) arranges bespoke African luxury adventures.



WHERE Landlocked country in southern Africa sharing a border with Zimbabwe at the iconic Victoria Falls.

WHY Zambia is all about adventure – forget endless vehicle-based game viewing, this is a place where you get out and walk or take to a canoe.

WHEN The dry season from May to October is the best time to visit.

WHAT'S NEW Until the opening of its new camp in Liuwa Plains (planned for the end of 2016), Norman Carr Safaris (normancarrsafaris.com) is operating out of the refurbished Mutamanene Camp. This region is extremely remote with excellent birding, a strong wild dog population and the best wildebeest migration after the Serengeti.

DON'T MISS Swimming in Devil's Pool at Victoria Falls (only accessible from the Zambian side), walking in the South Luangwa National Park and catching a tiger fish in the Lower Zambezi.

EDITOR'S TIP A truly extraordinary natural phenomenon is the fruit bat migration which takes place annually in November and December in Kasanka National Park. Up to ten million straw-coloured fruit bats converge in a swarm on the ripening fruit trees – it's Africa's largest mammal migration.

HOW Cazenove + Loyd (020-3553 8168; cazloyd.com) specialises in holidays throughout Africa, as well as South America, India and the Far East.



WHERE East Africa, with a long stretch of Indian Ocean coastline and islands.

WHY Tanzania boasts vast areas of wilderness with spectacular open plains and game viewing. It is also home to Kilimanjaro – Africa's highest peak – and the Ngorongoro Crater – the world's largest intact caldera. With Zanzibar a short hop by plane, it is one of the best countries to combine safari and beach.

WHEN A year-round destination except during the heavy rains of April and May. January and February are best times to see wildebeest calving in the southern Serengeti while the famous 'migration' river crossings take place from July to September in the northern Serengeti.

WHAT'S NEW March 2016 sees the launch of Asilia's (asiliaafrica.com) new lodge, The Highlands, on the remote slopes of the Olmoti volcano, just north of the Ngorongoro Crater. With seven luxurious domed tents, this stunning, high-altitude camp will offer nature walks, game drives and hiking.

DON'T MISS The Selous or Ruaha National Park – two incredible game reserves that, although easily reached from Dar es Salaam, are accessible to tourists only by light aircraft.

EDITOR'S TIP Post-safari, keen divers should go to Mafia Island, Zanzibar.

HOW Aardvark Safaris (01980-849160; aardvarksafaris.co.uk) specialises in holidays in central and southern Africa.

Ski & sushi

JAPAN'S NORTHERN ISLAND OF HOKKAIDO IS KNOWN FOR ITS GREAT POWDER SKIING, BUT IT IS ALSO THE SOURCE OF SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST SEAFOOD, SAYS **KATE CROCKETT**



My hands are defrosting around a bowl of steaming carbohydrate that smells like the most delicious thing I'll ever eat. I'm ravenous. The door swings open and in tramp four snowboarders in a swirl of powder snow; helmets and gloves are pulled off and jackets hung, like mine, beside the old wood stove in the centre of the room as they call out their lunch orders. The elderly proprietor calls back. It's cosy in the hut – the perfect place to recharge after a busy morning's skiing. But here it's not tartiflette and fondue that fuel the afternoon's adventures but rice topped with salmon roe and thick, slippery udon noodles with mountain vegetables.

KATE CROCKETT; JNTO; NISEKO PROMOTION BOARD

I'm in Boyo-so, the oldest hut on Mt Niseko-Annupuri, an extinct volcano that is the hub of Niseko ski resort, on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. Hokkaido is Japan's second-largest island and the country's frontier land; Mt Niseko-Annupuri is covered by snow up to four months of the year. It's a mild 2°C outside but it is windy and snow is still falling, topping up the many metres already beneath my skis. I've spent the morning exploring with my guide Rupert, a British instructor in his second season. Like me, he was drawn to Niseko by its reputation as one of the world's best destinations for powder skiing but also its relaxed atmosphere and cosmopolitan crowd. He's also here for the food, hence he's brought me to his favourite place on the piste. We've both ordered tempura soba, hearty buckwheat noodles topped with a huge prawn in crisp, golden batter. It's simple but delicious.

Recharged, we speed towards the summit via the Hirafu Gondola and a series of chairlifts. At the snow-park boundary, Rupert wants to hike to the 1,308m summit to view the vast backcountry playground that drops off the back of Mt Niseko-Annupuri. We reach the ceremonial bell at 1,000m, but get no further: the weather has closed in and the lifts have shut. In the whiteout, we head down, via the network of red and green runs, to Hirafu, the base for my stay. We're not alone; in fact, in Niseko it is usual to ski from around 8.30am until 2pm and then retire for a restorative soak in a hot spring.

AT THE SUMMIT, A VAST BACKCOUNTRY PLAYGROUND DROPS OFF THE BACK OF OF MT NISEKO-ANNUPURI





Hirafu is one of the four main resorts – alongside Niseko Village, Niseko Annupuri and Hanazono – that cluster at the base of Mt Niseko-Annupuri. It is also the largest and liveliest, and the location of most of Niseko's finest eateries – one of›


1


2


3

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Mt Yotei provides a dramatic backdrop. The hot spring at Ki Niseko, discreetly hidden from view behind a snow drift. Boyo-so hut on Mt Niseko-Annupuri is a charming spot for a hearty bowl of noodles. OPPOSITE Niseko is one of Japan's most popular resorts for off-piste skiing. The lounge at Moku no Sho ryokan

3 OF THE BEST NISEKO RESTAURANTS

1. KAMIMURA

A long-established favourite in Hirafu and its chef-patron – Hokkaido native Yuichi Kamimura, who once worked at Tetsuya in Sydney – is still at the top of his game. Expect multi-course fine dining on Hokkaido's best produce, reflecting the minutiae of the changing seasons. For a less formal taste of Yuichi's cuisine, his second eatery, Bistro Kutchan Sakaba, in nearby Kutchan town serves Japanese-style tapas. *kamimura-niseko.com*

2. RAKUICHI SOBA

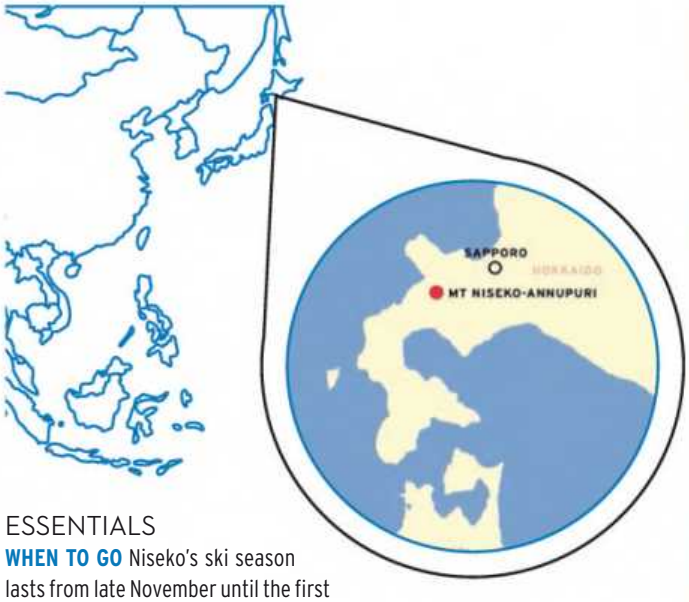
This 12-seat soba shop, located in a rural setting in the Annupuri resort area, is run by elderly soba master Tatsuru Rai and his wife and is a local institution. The dough is prepared fresh daily and the noodles are cut and cooked as you watch from the counter. Try the hot duck noodles. The soba is so good that there is always a queue from long before opening (11.30am) until the lunchtime dough runs out – usually well before the official 3pm closing time. Rakuichi is also open for dinner from 5pm: sweet-talk your concierge into securing you a reservation. *431 Niseko, Niseko-cho, Abuta-gun; 00-81-136-58 3170*

3. SESSA

Newly opened in 2015, this is the best-value lunch in Hirafu. The £7.50 set menu includes Wagyu beef sukiyaki, Hokkaido scallops and other seasonal seafood (including puffer fish when we were there) – and that's just the appetiser! *sessa.boo.jp*

which, An Dining, just happens to be within the hotel in which I am staying, the smart Ki Niseko, which is entering its second season. An Dining is the domain of Shinichi Maeda, a young Hokkaido chef with a passion for local produce. That evening I sample his signature multi-course menu, which is a roster of the great and the good of Hokkaido's winter delicacies, such as scallops, surf clams, sea urchin and king snow crab. By the time the rare black Wagyu beef – reared on the wild Shiratoko peninsula in Eastern Hokkaido – is served, I'm full, and more than impressed by the island's abundance.

'The produce here is good enough already so you do not need to do too much,' smiles Shinichi, as he pours a local sake he's just discovered. 'Our winter seafood is exceptional but it's also great in summer.' That's reason enough to return.



ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO Niseko's ski season lasts from late November until the first week in May, with Chinese New Year by far the busiest time. Visit in February and March when there are fewer crowds, more sunny days and the snow is still falling.

HOW Stay in Western-style, ski-in, ski-out hotel Ki Niseko (kiniseko.com) which opened last season a snowball's throw from the Hirafu Gondola. Doubles from £200. Or go native and stay at Moku no Sho (mokunosho.com/en), a stunning contemporary Japanese inn, a 10-minute drive from the Annupuri resort area. Doubles from £121. Niseko is a one-hour, 45-minute drive from New Chitose airport, south of Sapporo. Cathay Pacific (cathaypacific.co.uk) flies five times a week between London and Sapporo via Hong Kong. For more information on travel to Japan, visit seejapan.co.uk.





FROM TOP Fresh seafood from chef Maeda at Ki Niseko. The hotel exterior. View from the piste







SKIING IN NISEKO

WHAT TO EXPECT

QUIETER SLOPES than the Alps.

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ski lessons and guiding, with mostly Australian, New Zealand and British instructors.

HELMETS – most people wear one.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE, such as the Hirafu Gondola and heated pavements in the main town, but still lots of old hooded chairlifts.

CHALET RENTAL a third of the price of Europe, with lift passes approximately half the price.

FREE WIFI on board all resort shuttle buses, which are free to use with a lift pass.

APRES-SKI CULTURE that revolves around restaurants and bars in the evening rather than en-route down from the mountain.

ACTIVITIES FOR NON-SKIERS AND CHILDREN, including snow shoeing, sledging, snow-tubing, snowmobiling (including mini ones for children). Plenty for adrenaline seekers, such as heliskiing, cat skiing (taking a snow tractor/piste basher to less-accessible areas of the mountain) and even a snowkite school.



FRESH FROM HOKKAIDO TO TOKYO

Even if you are not venturing north, Hokkaido's seafood makes up a large share of that sold at Tokyo's remarkable Tsukiji market, which is earmarked for closure in November 2016 (for a move to new premises) and is well worth a visit before it's gone forever. Sample a famous Tsukiji sushi breakfast in one of the market's best sushi shops with a guide from Inside Japan (insidejapantours.com) who will whisk you in through the back door (to avoid the two-hour queue out the front) for a feast of the freshest tuna, squid, shellfish and prawn that you will ever taste. If a seafood breakfast is not your thing, the Andaz Tavern inside the nearby Andaz Tokyo hotel (tokyo.andaz.hyatt.com) features Hokkaido specialities such as scallop, hairy crab, sea urchin, monk fish and wild venison on its hearty pub-style menu of comfort dishes, perfect for winter.

JNTO; NISEKO PROMOTION BOARD



THE LANGHAM — Classic Indulgence
Featuring Stone Shields, 2012, by Justin Berry

CHAPTER 1. THE ART OF INSPIRED INDULGENCE

THE ART OF THE STAY

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Travel calendar

PLAN YOUR GLOBAL ADVENTURES IN 2016 WITH OUR 12-MONTH GUIDE TO NOTEWORTHY EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL MOMENTS

JAN



1 CAPABILITY BROWN FESTIVAL, UK

Special events to mark 300 years since the birth of eighteenth-century landscaper Capability Brown (capabilitybrown.org) take place up and down the country, with locations ranging from urban landscapes to secret gardens not usually open to the public. An exhibition on Brown's best-known creation opens at Blenheim Palace on February 13.

15 ART DECO WEEKEND, MIAMI, USA

The Art Deco gems along Ocean Drive form the backdrop for this free festival of street performance and music (artdecoweekend.com), which started as a movement to preserve Miami's architecture from the 1920s–1940s. Runs until 17. *Mr & Mrs Smith (mrandmrs smith.com) offers two nights in a double room at Art Deco hotel The Tides – with its distinct port-hole windows – during the festival weekend, from £776, room only.*

21 JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL, INDIA

A key date in any book-lover's diary, Jaipur Literature Festival (jaipurliteraturefestival.org) has grown from being a small, little-known Indian affair to a globally important event. It is the largest free literary festival in the world and is held at the picturesque Diggi Palace Hotel in Jaipur. Speakers confirmed for 2016 include Margaret Atwood, Blake Morrison, Colin Thubron and the 2015 Man Booker Prize winner Marlon James. Runs until 25. *Greaves India (greavesindia.com) offers a five-night festival tour staying at the Diggi Palace with delegate's entry, confirmed seating, flights and transfers, from £1,425pp.*

27 QATAR MASTERS, DOHA, QATAR

Taking place on the Peter Harradine-designed course at Doha Golf Club, this event (qatar-masters.com), which takes place at the beginning of each year as part of the European Tour, is the pearl in Qatar's annual sporting calendar. Runs until 30. *Your Golf Travel (your golftravel.com) offers a five-night stay at the W Doha from January 26 with flights and tickets to the Qatar Masters, from £1,549pp.*

29 NORTHERN LIGHTS FESTIVAL, TROMSØ, NORWAY

The Arctic city of Tromsø comes alive for this festival (nordlysfestivalen.no/en), with classical and contemporary music concerts, outdoor events and activities to – if you're in luck – the backdrop of the aurora borealis. Until February 7. *Wexas Travel (wexas.com) offers a five-day trip including the festival and a cruise. From £875pp, with flights.*

FEB



29 THE SHIP IN THE ICE, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

Trapped in a frozen fjord by the Arctic sea ice, 60km from Longyearbyen on the island of Spitsbergen, the world's only ice-bound hotel welcomes guests for its short annual season, which lasts until approximately May 2. *Natural World Safaris (naturalworld safaris.com) offers a four-night snowmobiling trip with a stay on board the Ship in the Ice from £2,500pp, with flights.*

19 CUT IN THE COUNTRY, BERKSHIRE, UK

Chef Wolfgang Puck packs up his kitchen at 45 Park Lane, London and decamps to the country for a season at Restaurant Coworth Park at Coworth Park hotel in Berkshire. The CUT in the Country pop-up runs until March 6. *Stay at Coworth Park (dorchestercollection.com) from £395 per double room, B&B. An F&B credit will be included to be used in the pop-up restaurant.*

MAR



20 NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL, WASHINGTON DC, USA

Celebrating Japan's 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry blossom trees, this free public festival (nationalcherryblossomfestival.org) takes place under the blooms around the Tidal Basin until April 17. *Stay in view of the celebrations at Mandarin Oriental Washington DC (mandarinoriental.com/washington), from £355, B&B.*

24 ART BASEL, HONG KONG

The newest of the 'Basels' (artbasel.com/en/hong-kong) sticks to its winning format of combining priceless pieces with works from emerging artists. Runs until 26. *Stay at Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong (mandarinoriental.com/hong kong). Doubles from £360, B&B. Fair packages to be announced.*

24 OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR, AUSTRALIA

Turandot, Puccini's exotic fantasy of death-marked love, comes to what must be the world's most magical setting for an opera stage, floating on Sydney Harbour (opera.org.au). Runs until April 24. *Turquoise Holidays (turquoiseholidays.co.uk) offers a two-week holiday to Australia from £2,995pp, including four nights in Sydney with premium opera seats, flights and car hire.*

ENCOUNTERS BY REBECCA BAUMAN/ART BASEL

APR



5 EXHIBITIONISM, SAATCHI GALLERY, LONDON

The Rolling Stones will stage their first ever major exhibition (stonesexhibitionism.com), taking over the Saatchi Gallery with more than 500 unseen artefacts from the band's personal collections, including rare sound archives . Runs until September 4. *Stay while in London in one of the newly refurbished rooms at The Portobello Hotel (curioushotels.com), patronised by rock 'n' roll royalty including The Rolling Stones. Doubles from £255, B&B.*

23 ANTIGUA SAILING WEEK, ANTIGUA

This week-long regatta (sailingweek.com) attracts an international fleet of yachts, with many sailing from the USA and across the Atlantic from Europe to take part. The racing, parties and fun runs until 29. *The Inn at English Harbour, Antigua, offers front-row views of the racing action from the hotel and the comfort of its own yacht. Carrier (carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights from £2,520pp, with flights.*



23 HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK, VIRGINIA, USA

Billed as 'America's largest open house', more than 250 of Virginia's most beautiful gardens, homes and historic landmarks throw open their gates for visitors as part of this eight-day celebration of Virginia in spring (vagardenweek.org). Runs until 30. *America As You Like It (americaasyoulikeit.com) offers an 11-night 'Vibrant Cities, Secret Gardens' fly-drive holiday, with multiple stops in Virginia, from £1,105pp including filghts, car hire and accommodation.*

MAY





4 NEW DIRECT FLIGHTS TO COSTA RICA FROM UK

Home to five per cent of the globe's entire biodiversity, Costa Rica becomes more accessible than ever as British Airways launches direct, weekly flights from Gatwick. *Local specialist Horizontes (horizontes.com) offers a 14-day 'Tropical Luxury' tour featuring rainforests, volcanoes and pristine coast, from £3,233pp, with BA flights.*

13 GRAND PRIX DE MONACO HISTORIQUE, MONTE CARLO

The event, which celebrates its tenth anniversary, features vintage cars from the golden age of motor racing. Watch skilled drivers tackle the famous street circuit – the cars may not be as fast as those in the main race, but they win the beauty contest, hands down. Until 15. *Stay at The Fairmont Monte-Carlo (fairmont.com/monte-carlo), which has views overlooking the famous hairpin. Doubles from €759 per night.*

14 UNDISCOVERED TREASURES TOUR, JAPAN

Art historian and author of *The Art Lover's Guide to Japanese Museums* Sophie Richard leads a unique art tour of Japan, the star of which is a visit to the Benesse Art Site on Naoshima in the Seto Inland Sea, an art museum and conceptual space. Runs until 24. *The 10-night journey, with Cazenove + Loyd (cazloyd.com) in partnership with Art Fund, is for 12 people and costs from £9,915pp.*

JUN



6 ROSE FESTIVAL, DEVON

RHS Garden Rosemoor in Great Torrington, Devon (rhs.org.uk) hosts its first annual Rose Festival in 2016, with swathes of scented blooms, workshops, walks and unusual cultivars on sale. Runs until July 10. *Stay at Hotel Endsleigh (hotelendsleigh.com), an hour away, set in 100 acres of woodland, follies and grottos created by Humphry Repton. Doubles from £240, B&B.*

24 VERONA OPERA, ITALY

Verona Opera (arena-verona.com) opens for its 2016 season. By day there are plenty of cultural sites to take in such as the Roman Arena, one of the best preserved amphitheatres in the world built in 100AD, and by night the air fills with glorious arias. Until August 28. *Bellini Travel (bellinitravel.com) offers a three-night stay at Grand Hotel Villa Feltrinelli on Lake Garda with tickets to the opera and private transfers from £1,985pp.*

27 STARMUS FESTIVAL, TENERIFE

This science, astronomy and rock music festival (starmus.com) is held in honour of Sir Stephen Hawking. Tenerife is one of the best places on earth to stargaze, and last year saw the arrival of new telescopes at the famous Teide Observatory. Musician and astronomer Brian May is among the speakers, plus Sir Stephen Hawking himself. Runs until July 2. *Elegant Resorts (elegantresorts.co.uk) offers seven nights at the Gran Hotel Bahia Del Duque, close to the main events, from £1,120pp, including flights.*



29 LITERARY FESTIVAL OF PARATY, BRAZIL

This highbrow literary festival (flip.org.br) was set up by publisher Liz Calder, who wanted to create a Hay-on-Wye-style event in Brazil. A programme featuring South America's top intellectuals and writers is complemented by European and North American voices. Past speakers have included Julian Barnes, David Hare and Colm Tóibín. Runs until July 3. *Steppes Travel (steppestravel.co.uk) offers a nine-day trip including Rio and the festival in Paraty from £1,675pp, including flights.*›

ACM/ALESI; COURTESY OF THE ROLLING STONES ARCHIVE; TOURISM TENERIFE; *YELLOW PUMPKIN* BY YAYOI KUSAMA; VISITTHEUSA.COM

Travel calendar

JUL


5

30 MASTERPIECE, LONDON, UK

One of the summer's most glamorous events, Masterpiece (masterpiecefair.com) is held at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and features art, antiques and design. Until July 6. *Stay at hotel partner The Connaught (the-connaught.co.uk). Doubles from £475, B&B. Fair packages to be announced.*

2 IL PALIO, SIENA, ITALY

This biannual bareback horse race in the medieval Piazza del Campo in the heart of Siena is an unforgettable spectacle. Witness the passion and emotion from a seat overlooking the Piazza. Also on August 16. *Red Savannah (redsavannah.com) offers a three-night stay at Castel Monastero in Chianti, within easy reach of Siena, from £965pp, B&B, including flights and car hire. They can also arrange balcony seats, from€350pp.*


10

2 ELEVEN ARCHES AT AUCKLAND CASTLE, COUNTY DURHAM, UK

Historic Auckland Castle in County Durham becomes the north of England's newest arts venue with the opening of a spectacular live-action night show from production company Eleven Arches (elevenarches.org). *Kynren* is an epic story spanning 2,000 years of British history, with an equally epic scale (a 7.5-acre stage) and epic cast and crew (1,000 professionally trained volunteers). Runs for 14 shows until September 17. *Stay nearby at Seaham Hall (seaham-hall.co.uk) Doubles £225, B&B.*

5 RHS HAMPTON COURT PALACE FLOWER SHOW, SURREY, UK

The world's largest flower show (rhs.org.uk) – with its enviable backdrop – is an eclectic mix of gardens and floral displays by world-class growers and designers. New categories for 2016 include Water Gardens, City Gardens and Floral Meadows & Market Gardens. Riding on last year's success, Brand USA will be exhibiting a taste of the USA. Runs until 10. *Stay at Great Fosters (great fosters.co.uk) in Surrey, which has its own gorgeous gardens. Doubles from £180, B&B.*

10 LE SEMAINE DES GRAND CRUS, BURGUNDY, FRANCE

It's the ultimate journey for oenophiles: cruising through Burgundy sampling all 33 Grand Cru wines. Winemakers from domaines including Maison Joseph Drouhin and Domaine Ponsot will host private tastings plus gourmet dinner parties in their cellars and on board the luxury barge *Amaryllis*. *The six-night cruise from St Léger to Dijon is for eight people. From £7,250pp, with transfers from Paris (belmond.com).*

AUG


11

1 SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, HELSINGØR, DENMARK

Kronborg Castle, a Unesco World Heritage Site on the North Sealand coast, has been the setting for this annual festival (hamletscenen.dk) since 1816. Marking 400 years since Shakespeare's death in 2016, 'Hamlet's Castle' hosts three weeks of theatre, film and music. Runs until 21. *Stay at beachside Marienlyst Hotel (marienlyst.dk). Doubles from £126, B&B.*

5 RIO 2016 OLYMPICS , BRAZIL

Brace yourselves, the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (rio2016.com/en) promises to deliver a sporting spectacle like no other, with 42 different sports being contested including two new additions, golf and rugby. Runs until 21. *Miraviva (miravivatravel.com) offers a three-week itinerary including nine nights in a private apartment in Rio for the Games, a visit to Iguaçu Falls, a five-night Amazon yacht charter, finishing at a spa resort on the Alagoas Coast or in Bahia in the northeast. From £7,260pp, including flights.*

9 INAUGURAL JOURNEY OF THE GRAND HIBERNIAN, IRELAND

The first luxury touring train in Ireland departs Dublin for its inaugural journey to Cork, Killarney, Limerick, Galway and Westport, with 40 guests accommodated in elegant en-suite cabins, the designs of which are inspired by Dublin's classic Georgian architecture. *The four-night 'Legends and Loughs' journey costs from £4,010pp (belmond.com).*

11 GLYNDEBOURNE OPERA, SUSSEX, UK

Summer isn't complete without a visit to glorious Glyndebourne (glyndebourne.com), the Sussex opera house. To mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the company is reviving Peter Hall's acclaimed 1981 production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Runs until 28. *Stay at Gravetye Manor in East Grinstead (gravetyemanor.co.uk), which has gardens designed by William Robinson and a Michelin-star restaurant. Doubles from £470, for dinner, B&B.*

SEP


17

10 YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION, V&A, LONDON, UK

The V&A's (vam.ac.uk) major autumn exhibition examines how ideals and aspirations of the late 1960s were expressed through music, fashion, film and design. Runs until February 26, 2017. *Stay nearby at The Kensington, part of the Doyle Collection (doylecollection.com). Doubles from £235, B&B. Exhibition packages to be announced.*

BETHANY CLARKE; MIKE HOBAN/THE HOBAN GRAVETT ARCHIVE

OCT


7

17 LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL, UK

With a reputation as one of the largest and most innovative design events in the world, London Design Festival (londondesignfestival.com) incorporates more than 350 events and installations across the city from the V&A to Somerset House. Runs until 25. *Stay at Ham Yard Hotel in Soho (firmdalehotels.com), which hosts festival-related events. Doubles from £420, B&B.*

23 GALWAY INTERNATIONAL OYSTER FESTIVAL, IRELAND

Now in its sixty-first year, this celebration of all things oyster (galwayoysterfestival.com) opens with a parade through Galway's medieval streets to the home of the city's seafood trade, the Spanish Arch. The highlight is the World Oyster Opening Championships. Runs until 26. *Stay 40 minutes from Galway at Ashford Castle (ashfordcastle.com). Doubles from €535, B&B.*

7 CHELTENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL, UK

A must for literary fans, this international festival (cheltenhamfestivals.com) is a 10-day marathon of 500-plus events, discussions and debates welcoming writers and thinkers as diverse as Jonathan Franzen, Salman Rushdie, Nick Clegg, Max Hastings and Nigella Lawson. Runs until 16. *Stay at The Montpellier Chapter (the montpellierchapterhotel.com), doubles from £225, B&B; or out of town at Cowley Manor (cowleymanor.com), doubles from £295, B&B.*

NOV


9

1 DAY OF THE DEAD, OAXACA, MEXICO

This festival – joyous and carnivalesque rather than macabre – celebrates those who have passed away in the form of elaborate costumes, skull face-painting, skull-shaped sweets, and all manner of skeleton effigies. It is celebrated throughout Latin America, but in Mexico it is unforgettably colourful. It is accompanied by funfairs, dances, visits to cemeteries and special foods and drinks prepared for the occasion. Runs until 2. *Rainbow Tours (rainbowtours.co.uk) offers a nine-day Day of the Dead Culture and History itinerary in and around Oaxaca costing from £2,795pp, including flights. The trip includes the chance to walk in the magnificent Comparsa Parade on November 1 in a local village outside Oaxaca.*

9 MOSAICS OF RAVENNA AND VENICE ART TOUR

Eminent historian John Julius Norwich leads a tour exploring the art of the mosaic, from the exquisite churches of Ravenna to St Mark's Basilica and the cathedral on the island of Torcello, Venice. *The four-night tour with Fine Art Travel (finearttravel.co.uk) runs until 15 with a maximum of 25 guests. From £3,000pp, excluding flights.*

18 MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This three-day food and wine festival (gourmetescape.com.au), held among the vineyards and on the beaches of Western Australia, has established a name for itself in the five years it has been running. The event has attracted chefs including Heston Blumenthal, Rick Stein and Marco Pierre White to champion the region's abundant larder of artisan cheeses, seafood, truffles, craft beers and, of course, fine wines. Runs until November 20. *Wexas Travel (wexas.com) offers a 12-day Margaret River & West Coast itinerary from £2,170pp, including flights, transfers, 10 days' car hire, 11 nights' accommodation and some meals and touring. Tickets for the festival are available separately via the Gourmet Escape website.*


18

DEC



MAASAI OLYMPICS 2016, KENYA

Rio isn't the only place hosting competitive athletics in 2016: this cultural sporting event (maasaiolympics.com) sees Masaai warriors compete in sprints, long-distance running and javelin throwing, as well as the less familiar sports, standing high jump and *rungu* (wooden baton) throwing. *Journeys by Design (journeysbydesign.com) offers a seven-night Kenyan safari journey including Amboseli and the Mara, with a full day at the Maasai Olympics, from £6,018pp, including flights.*

UMBRIA WINTER JAZZ FESTIVAL, ITALY

Little sister to the more famous Perugia Jazz Festival, this five-day event (umbriajazz.com), at the end of December and into January 2017, is a unique way to see in the new year in one of Italy's most beautiful hilltop towns. It is held in the Umbrian town of Orvieto, which is famed for its glorious cathedral and frescoes by Luca Signorelli. *Italian specialist Bellini Travel (bellinitravel.com) can arrange for rental of Villa Melissa in the hamlet of Fighine, 30 minutes by car from Orvieto, for a five-night stay over new year, for £6,690. The villa sleeps eight and includes a cook and maid.*

BEVERLY JOUBERT; EMILIA ROMAGNA TOURISM; VISIT CHELTENHAM/NICK TURNER

Win a luxury trip for two to the Great Barrier Reef

THE LARGEST AND MOST SPECTACULAR REEF SYSTEM ON EARTH, THE GREAT BARRIER REEF IS ON THE BUCKET LIST OF TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE – IT'S TIME TO TICK IT OFF YOURS

House & Garden Destinations and Tourism and Events Queensland (queensland.com) have teamed up to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a luxury 11-night holiday for two people to experience the world-famous Great Barrier Reef and Unesco World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest in Queensland, Australia.

The prize includes a four-night stay on Heron Island (heronisland.com), a natural coral cay and wildlife-lovers' paradise just off the Gladstone coast. This natural wonderland resort is situated right on the reef and, between October and March, is the breeding home to hundreds of turtles.

The winner will then travel up to the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef region – the only place in the world where the rainforest meets the reef – to stay at Thala Beach Nature Reserve (thalabeach.com.au), a deluxe eco resort set in the world's oldest rainforest, overlooking the breathtaking Coral Sea.

For the final element of this unforgettable journey, the winner will head further north to newly renovated Lizard Island (lizardisland.com.au), a pocket of exclusive luxury just a short boat ride away from The Cod Hole, one of the world's most famous dive sites. The ultra-luxury resort is so exclusive that every guest can have their own private beach for the day.

THE PRIZE

• **Two economy return flights** with Qantas to Queensland • **Four nights** in a beachside suite at Heron Island • **Four nights** in a deluxe bungalow at Thala Beach Nature Reserve • **Three nights** luxury accommodation on Lizard Island

FOR A CHANCE TO WIN

Answer the following question:
In which state of Australia would you find the Great Barrier Reef?
a) New South Wales
b) Victoria
c) Queensland
Enter at: ***houseandgarden.co.uk***

Closes: January 11, 2016. Ts&Cs apply. See website for details.


Heron Island


Thala Beach Nature Reserve


Lizard Island

ANDREW WATSON/GETTY IMAGES



LOUIS ROEDERER

À LA RECHERCHE DE L'ŒUVRE


Wonder in the desert. Every day.
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